THE STRUCTURATION OF CAMPUS-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: ACTIVITIES, CONTRADICTIONS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

by

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ABSTRACT

In the United States, public universities must negotiate public responsibility with market interests, and are often under suspicion of being businesslike and detached from local community issues and concerns. Campus-community partnerships are gaining traction as a preferable way for public universities to bridge campus and community concerns. This dissertation is a qualitative case study of UPartner (UP), an organization that creates campus-community partnerships between a large public university and a community system identified by that university through a statistical analysis of zip codes that indicated underrepresentation at the university. In this dissertation, I explain my methodological perspective as an *engaged advisor.* Through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and historical research, I engaged with UP to understand how participants characterized their activities and strategized ways to change the university system.

Using structuration theory as a framework, I explain how UP participants structure their activities and characterize the systems of campus and community. I discuss several discursive patterns and practices including *Connection, Hopeland, Confusion,* and *Not Service/Outreach.* I also discuss these patterns in light of their enabling and constraining qualities, and the extent to which they echo larger discourses concerning democracy and the market. I give particular focus to the activity of partnership, which is structured as *Reciprocity, Sustainability,* and *Difficulty.* Finally, I extend structurating activity theory's notion of contradictions to discuss several

contradictions that UP participants encounter when trying to change the university system, including *Deficit Discourses, The Marginalization of Community Based Research,* and *The Containment of UP*. I explain each contradiction, and then show how UP participants attempt to overcome the contradiction through desired new discursive patterns.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the United States (U.S.), each state has a system of public higher education that is partially funded by that state's government, the federal government, and U.S. taxpayers. However, the names "public university" or "state university" can be somewhat misleading, because these universities are not entirely publicly funded; they are funded from a wide variety of revenue streams such as student tuition, sports teams, and donations from private and corporate donors. In short, public universities are complex organizations with a large number of stakeholder groups, and are an ongoing source of national interest and debate. Over the last 25 years, citizens, academics, politicians, and journalists have criticized public universities for neglecting public interests in favor of corporate interests (Aronowitz, 2000; Giroux, 2009; Washburn, 2005). As a result, public universities are sometimes characterized as businesses, where students become consumers and corporations control the product. However, there are advocates who resist this troubling characterization and work to keep public universities more publicly responsive. The tension between market and democratic interests in public universities is important to understand, and provides an opportunity to investigate how those within such institutions navigate conflicting ideologies. Practically, it is also important to understand this tension as public funding for education declines.

In order to keep the public interest in public universities central, some campuses are turning to creative solutions to increase community involvement. The belief is that, if universities increase their number of successful projects with the community, it will be a sign of successful civic engagement (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Currently, public universities have several models for working with the community. One of the most well known models is service learning. Service learning advocates have consistently encouraged campus involvement with their surrounding communities. However, because service learning methods dichotomize university members as benefactors and community members as recipients, the method has been criticized as charity or as perpetuating privilege (Artz, 2001; Butin, 2005; Endres & Gould, 2009).

In recent years, another model of engagement has developed called "campus-community partnerships." Such partnerships are designed as interactive and dynamic, and attempt to depart from unidirectional models such as service learning (Dempsey, 2009). Campus-community partnerships engage community members in reciprocal ways to ensure that participants all have equal voice: "The central challenge is to frame social development issues in a way that allows a'll partners to achieve their goals – this reciprocal benefit through the partnership" (Hunter, Munro, Dunn, & Olson, 2010, p. 305). In recent years, campus-community partnerships have become a celebrated model. Holland (2005) summarizes community engagement work and highlights partnerships:

> I believe it is a sign of our advanced state of understanding that the most intensely examined issues around the field of engagement over the last year or two tend to fall into two broad categories: 1) how to institutionalize engagement (which includes issues of measurement, rewards/recognition, infrastructure, faculty development etc.), and 2) how to create effective community-campus partnerships. Partnership issues are especially prominent and have gained attention in the following ways: Many recent campus-based workshops have emerged with the intent of improving engagement and partnership programs; "partnerships" is the

> theme of the 2005 Western Regional Campus Compact Conference; Trinity College has created an annual in-depth training institute on partnerships for community-campus teams; California Campus Compact held a special summit on partnership issues in Fall 2004 and is now launching several campus-community dialogues. (2005, p. 10)

It is apparent that the concept of campus-community partnerships has gained notable traction in higher education. In this dissertation, I seek to understand this growing practice.

This research project is a case study of an organization called UPartner (UP) that attempted to promote the public good in public higher education and work toward systemic change in a large western public university in the United States. UP wanted to catalyze community involvement and keep community interests central to teaching, research, and service in higher education. UP's activities were multifaceted, but in particular they focused on the work of *campus-community partnership*. The bulk of the organization's work was done collaboratively in partnership with local communities. Because of their commitment to collaboration and innovations through partnership, UP has been widely acclaimed and nationally awarded as successful. In 2011, it celebrated its tenth anniversary and ended its 10 year strategic planning cycle. In preparation for their next 10 years, I collaborated with the organization on research that would be meaningful to their planning process and also afford the opportunity to extend theory.

In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I provide a more detailed background of the problems that motivated the research by explaining the public university context in the United States. Then, I discuss the specific work of campus-community partnerships. Next, I preview how this study can add to research using

structuration theory in several productive ways that are significant to the field of organizational communication. Finally, I explain each dissertation chapter's content and purpose.

Background of the Study

Current State of Public Universities in the United States

The organization featured in this case study was a small part of a large western public university in the United States (U.S.). Public universities play a crucial role in U.S. democratic and economic systems. These universities were initially created through the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Acts: each state in the nation was given land that they were allowed to sell to fund the creation of universities. Since those initial land-grant institutions, each state's university system has grown, and several states have additional public universities that are not land-grant universities. These public universities are often referred to as "state universities," because of initial funding from the state, and because there are no federal universities except for military institutions of higher education (e.g. West Point). Public universities are granted nonprofit (501c(3)) tax status, and are currently funded by a variety of revenue streams including funding from the state and federal government, taxpayers, students (through tuition), sports teams, and charitable donations.

Because of these differing revenue streams, public universities are complex, play many different roles, and serve many different stakeholder groups. The purpose of public higher education is continually debated, and current research often discusses the tension between two dominant opinions: (1) public universities should serve the interests of the state and democracy and (2) public universities should stimulate the market economy

(Bok, 2003; Giroux, 2009; Ostrander, 2004; Price, 2008). These debates are complex, and most argue that the two purposes need to be creatively and productively combined (e.g., Bok, 2003). However, the central concern in this debate over public higher education is that democratic and market concerns are not always ideologically compatible, and are at times antagonistic. Thus, public universities make interesting cases for the study of communication, given that they are situated at the intersecting interests of democracy and the market.

The conflicts between democracy and market can be seen in all three central activities of universities: research, teaching, and service. As for research, many U.S. citizens look to public university knowledge as credible and ethically responsive to citizen concerns (Washburn, 2005). These universities are allowed a great deal of autonomy in return for the "crucial role they play in certifying knowledge (Brown, 2011)." Taxpayers can feel an ownership in university research outcomes. For example, in genetics research done at Texas A&M University (TAMU), the faculty were educated in public universities, the research was federally funded, and the project drew on the reputation of TAMU (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Thus, when a corporation tried to take controlling interest in further research, it caused a public controversy (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). This shows the central conflict: university and community stakeholders may not want corporations taking their knowledge for financial gain, but corporations are willing to give large financial grants to these nonprofit educational institutions in order to continue research. It is often unclear how much the university or the corporation should benefit. Such conflicts and negotiations are ongoing, with universities constantly negotiating research boundaries.

The conflicts between democratic and market interests can also be seen in teaching at public universities. Some educational theorists argue that a key role of public education is to train students to be future U.S. citizens. Former Harvard President Derek Bok writes:

> Not only will college graduates continue to vote more frequently; since they are better informed than those with less education, their influence on the outcome will be greater. As in the past, they will likewise make up the vast majority of all public officials, elected or appointed. All these factors make their preparation for enlightened citizenship especially important to the nation. (Bok, 2003, p. 177)

In other words, higher education can prepare students to be "enlightened" citizens who can use critical thinking skills to make informed decisions in elections and as leaders. Democratic principles are fashioned as the most important goal of higher education, a goal that is being thwarted by market rationality (Giroux, 2009). Because schools are social institutions, Dewey (1916, 1997), arguably the most important 20th century public intellectual on pedagogy and citizenship, argued that students should democratically take part in creating their own institution, learning democratic process and the skills for social reform. However, in recent years, critics have argued that universities are feeling greater pressure to teach corporate business skills rather than citizenship. Aronowitz (2000) argues that the public university is merely training future workers in the knowledge economy as opposed to providing them with a liberal education. This follows a popular critique of the university as a business, and students as consumers of skills. McMillan and Cheney (1996) investigated the popularity of the "student as consumer" metaphor and argued that it had several disadvantages for teaching:

> Specifically, we argue that this metaphor (a) suggests undue distance between the student and the educational process, (b) highlights the promotional activities of professors and promotes the entertainment model of classroom learning; (c) inappropriately compartmentalizes the classroom experience as a product rather

> than a process; and (d) reinforces individualism at the expense of the community. (p.1)

Furthermore, a germane finding of the authors' study is to show how the social construction of student as consumer can obscure important public concerns, such as community building (McMillan & Cheney, 1996).

Finally, there is concern among academics that public interest is weakening in terms of service responsibilities. While employees of private universities do not have such obligations, employees of public universities are important civil servants. Because all taxpayers support public universities, all taxpayers should be able to access resources of these universities such as in public lectures and events. Internationally, U.S. public universities are often seen as a democratizing force, and a model of access and excellence (Baiocchi, Heller, & Silva, 2011). However, public funding is not the only revenue stream for public universities, and is actually on the decline. On the rise are funding streams from private interests that some argue may turn into a tide (Aronowitz, 2000). Therefore, it is important to consider what will happen to the "public good" in public universities when the public dollars dissipate.

To summarize, in all these three areas of interest – research, teaching, and service – there is growing concern that public universities are becoming corporatized and subsequently detached from citizen concerns (Bok, 2003; Ostrander, 2004). Critics are skeptical that public universities can be relevant to all citizens and not just wealthy and corporate citizens (Giroux, 2009). In short, many argue that market forces are corrupting public education, yet public education administrators continue to aggressively encourage market interest (Aronowitz, 2000; Bok, 2003; Brown, 2011; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Tuchman, 2009; Washburn, 2005). The debate continues about the ethical and practical

implications of market forces in the public university, and where to draw appropriate boundaries of involvement. Few, if any, believe that market influence will go away. Some believe it will become stronger (Aronowitz, 2000; Bok, 2003).

However, there is resistance to market influence, and this research follows one organization that opposed marketization. Campus-community partnerships align with advocates who want to keep the "public" in public universities central. The organization I studied, UPartner (UP), was critical of their current university system and believed that change was necessary. However, changing public higher education means challenging policies and practices that have been in place for decades. In other words, this means confronting patterns and practices that have become routinized and naturalized over time and are difficult to interrupt. Public universities, through this process of routinization, can become powerful, complex and closed institutions where change can be difficult, slow, and hard to steer. Despite this difficulty, several initiatives such as service learning, critical pedagogy, and campus-community partnerships are attempting to change current public university systems to be more inclusive and responsive to local community concerns. This study takes an in-depth look at the work of UP and how UP attempted to create change through campus-community partnership. In the next section, I provide a brief background and history of this relatively new practice.

Current Conceptions of Campus-Community Partnership

Although there are many different ways for university campuses and communities to engage with each other, this study focused specifically on the educational innovation of "campus-community partnership." This model has roots in traditions such as community organizing and community engagement. The concerns of campus-

community partnerships are similar to the concerns of engaged organizational communication scholars (Barge & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008; Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, 2002; Simpson & Seibold, 2008). In other words, campus-community partnerships, although relatively new in practice (less than 15 years old), are the latest in a succession of attempts to make education and research more inclusive, and see community members as holders and creators of knowledge. In this section, I offer definitions of partnership that have surfaced in recent research.

Because campus-community partnership models are relatively new, research is only beginning to show their unique value. In current conceptions of partnership, organizing is typically collaborative, and under-resourced and marginalized communities are included in the decision making process (Dempsey, 2009). In other words, partnership purposely involves the lower levels of traditional organizational hierarchies in decision-making processes. In many cases, these stakeholders (such as community members) are not formally acknowledged as part of the university system. They do not appear on a university's organizational chart. Partnerships are seen as interdependent and mutually beneficial for both campus and community (Miller & Hafner, 2008). Community member voices are just as important as the voices of professors and administrators. For example, if university administrators created a top-down policy mandate, such as a study abroad requirement, community stakeholders could react with suspicion because they were not involved in the process of creating the policy. Campus-community partnerships are different because they work toward inclusive change and policymaking that involves university and community members. Community members might suggest a "study locally" requirement instead of a study abroad requirement.

Because of this egalitarianism, campus-community partnerships are gaining traction as a preferable way for public universities to democratically bridge campus and community concerns. Several notable nonprofit organizations such as the Kellogg Foundation and Campus Compact have encouraged such partnerships as crucial to the reinvigoration of the democratic mission of universities (Kezar, Chambers, & Burkhardt, 2005).

Public universities realize that partnerships can enrich institutions of higher education while also advancing social and economic justice (Hunter, Munro, Dunn, & Olson, 2010). In this way, they are a critical project that has broader activist goals. The ideal goals of partnership are to restructure power relationships in order to elevate community interests in every traditional realm of higher education: teaching, research, and service. Consider this draft vision statement of the partnership I worked with: "Through collaborative partnerships that address systemic barriers to educational success, we create educational opportunities and access to higher education for community members, enriched university research and teaching opportunities, and an enhanced quality of life for all involved. (Board meeting document, 2011) This problem-solution statement constructs "barriers" in the current university system and then offers partnership solutions. By involving community interests, research, teaching, and even life become "enriched" and "enhanced." Burbank and Hunter (2008) write, "Within these partnerships, stakeholders work jointly to identify common issues worthy of investigation, with the goal of greater social justice and institutional reform for those within a community" (p.48). Again, institutional reform is an explicit part of the agenda. Partnerships desire results such as a community member team teaching a class with a tenure track professor, community members co-publishing with graduate students, and

the inclusion of community based research in retention, promotion, and tenure (RPT) policies.

A caveat in defining campus-community partnerships is that, because they are a relatively new practice, they can be confused with service learning. As you will read in this research, to speak of service in the context of partnership is controversial because partnerships see community members as equal holders and creators of knowledge. When I was in early conversations with the director of UP, my writing suggested that partnership could be seen as evolving from early service learning models. The connection between the two made the director nervous, as seen in this email correspondence: "You discuss the service-learning literature as one of the frameworks. (We are) not closely linked to the service-learning framework, we are much more closely aligned with community partnership, community capacity building, community engagement, community organizing and public scholarship" (Personal Correspondence, 2010). In this exchange, the director clarified that service-learning frameworks are not appropriate when discussing partnerships, and offered several other frameworks. All of the suggestions (engagement, public scholarship, capacity building) stressed the importance of a more critical and equal relationship.

In the context of bureaucratic public universities, partnership work can be uncomfortable because it threatens the status quo and can be unpredictable. Radically restructuring research, teaching, and service means that participants involved in partnership could encounter resistance and face those "barriers" to change that UP targets. Dempsey (2009) argues, "Campus–community partnerships are characterized by inequalities of power that impede collaboration and introduce conflicts" (p.2). For

example, professors who have spent many years earning their degrees may not want to share their classrooms or research, and academic departments may not want to change RPT rules. Partnership involves navigating such challenges and also tackling critical cultural differences, which create significant challenges for effective communication and shared goals (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). For example, when a university nursing school develops a partnership with a refugee center, it could be tempting for professors to come in and direct the agenda and take charge. It may be difficult to collaborate in reciprocal ways with community members of different cultures, especially with several languages spoken.

In sum, current conceptions of campus-community partnership are aligned with the mission of public universities promoting the public good. Partnership is currently defined in collaborative ways, and stresses interdependence. Partnerships (like UP) often have an explicitly activist agenda, which involves changing the traditional realms of research, teaching, and service to invite more collaboration and interdependence with community stakeholders. Because public universities have a history of bureaucratic practice and top-down policy solutions, partnerships can be a radical shift and thereby invoke resistance. Next, I discuss how the overall goal of partnership is the critical project of creating organizational change, and how communication can be of importance to partnership work. I explain how a communication centered approach to partnership adds to knowledge about the day to day activities of partnership, and the possibilities for systemic transformation that can be both theoretically and practically useful.

Key Theoretical and Practical Concerns

Apprehending how participants in a campus-community partnership discuss and construct their activities and attempt to create change in a public university system requires a close, critical look at current communication patterns. Because campus-community partnership is a relatively new practice, and partnership is growing in popularity, it is important to understand how organizational participants discursively frame the purposes and activities of the organization in situ. The discursive patterns produced and reproduced in an organization shape and guide its work in specific arrangements and relationships. It is especially important to understand the work of UP in terms of larger conversations about democracy and market influence in public higher education. Foundational knowledge about this organization can begin to build theory and also assist similar organizations in practical efforts such as advocacy and education.

Connecting everyday patterns and practices to larger societal discourses is a particular strength of structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), which provides the framework for this study. Giddens (1984) argues that individuals draw upon rules and resources (*structures)* in daily interactions, and because such structures are often repetitive, it becomes possible to discern similar social practices across time and space. These practices create and reinforce the boundaries of social collectives, or *systems*. Furthermore, structural properties of social systems are both the means and the ends that they create. This is called a *duality of structure*, a social praxis whereby members of a social collectivity repeat familiar patterns and practices that continue to bind them together (Cohen, 1989). Because communication features so prominently in the theory, Banks and Riley (1993) proposed it as ontology for organizational communication

studies. The theory has been widely affirmed by communication scholars as a communicative account of social structure.

Structures shape relationships, guide action, and both enable and constrain future possibilities (Giddens, 1984). An understanding of the structuration of an organization's work, such as the work of UP, offers important insight as to how organizational participants construct their actions and purposes through ongoing discourse (Kirby & Krone, 2002). In other words, although you could read a pamphlet regarding the "promoted" activities of UP, this research argues instead that the activities of participants are a communicative and structurational process that guides action. In this study, I offer foundational descriptive explanation of *how UP participants structured their activities.*

Furthermore, because partnership seeks to address larger tensions concerning democratic and market forces, a key contribution of this case is also to understand how partnership is structured in terms of larger societal systems. Partnerships need to pay careful attention to systemic issues, and take societal structures into account as they challenge institutional and individual practices (Miller & Hafner, 2008). Harter et al. (2005) argue that structuration theory is particularly useful for calling attention to how institutional practices are imbued with values and establish certain identities as preferable among other choices. By understanding how campus-community partnership is structured, those institutional values and preferences will surface, allowing for exploration of the constraints and possibilities of partnership work and revealing how macro level systems influence everyday communication patterns.

Finally, structuration theory is a useful framework for critiquing power imbalances that are targeted in the process of organizational change. Again, partnership

work has broader activist goals of institutional transformation, and targets socio-historical power imbalances. Giddens argues that, over time, new structures will replace old ones, and systems will transform. However, such change processes are often complex and slow. It is more likely for people to continue to repeat structures than to continuously change them. In other words, "We become attached to the familiar, even to the point of reproducing aspects of life that are otherwise unpleasant" (Cassell, 1993, p. 14). For example, the structuration of professors as having expert knowledge and leading university classes has been reproduced so often that it may seem natural, and its consistent reproduction provides stability in many ways. But, when that reproduction is interrupted, a new way of communicating can replace the old and inspire organizational change.

While the first main concern of this study is to understand campus-community partnership and its structuration in more detail, the second concern is to explain how partnerships attempt to create systemic change. Giddens (1984) argues that humans are competent agents who have the capability to make changes by making different structural choices. H.E. Canary (2010a) writes, "Although Giddens argues that much of social action is very much routine, agency implies that individuals are nevertheless in control of and knowledgeable about their actions" (p.30). This agency allows for possibilities for alternative choices, and individuals that are discursively conscious can defy dominant ideologies in many ways (Harter, Berquist, Titsworth, Novak, & Brokaw, 2005). Therefore, it is important to understand *how UP participants strategized changing discursive patterns and practices in one public university system*. In short, I seek first to understand how participants communicate about their current activities, and then to

explain their plans to create institutional change through leveraging new ways of communicating.

Therefore, while the first concern of this study is largely interpretive in its desire to understand campus-community partnership, the second concern of this study is a critical analysis of power between campus and community systems, and a discussion of how power imbalances were targeted for transformation. Poole and McPhee (2005) argue that few have used structuration theory in critical scholarship even through it is an important tool for deconstructing power and identifying opportunities for structural and systemic transformation. As I elaborate in Chapter Two, critical approaches in organizational communication are concerned with power as central to organizational life, and theorize issues of control, domination, and resistance (Ganesh, 2008). Mumby (2008) noted that critical approaches view organizing as a political process taking place amid competing interests. This study positioned democracy and market rationality as two such competing interests. Furthermore, Mumby (2008) argues that, critical research employs an emancipatory logic that believes that individuals can create social change through self-reflection and the possibility of alternative organizing processes. Likewise, this research uses a structurational framework to analyze the possibility of alternative organizing processes in order for partnership to work toward social change.

In addition to the theoretical extensions of this project, I offer practical strategies that might benefit the campus-community partnership involved in this study. Ideally, this research will assist the organization I studied in identifying areas where they might focus strategic planning, and provide practical suggestions for their operation. It is also my hope that this research will benefit the communities that I worked with and assist in

creating stronger partnerships. The findings of this project might also serve as a foundation for other institutional partnerships. Others may adapt or transfer this study's suggestions to their own situation based on the differences between their organization and UP, the organization I studied. In the next section, I lay out the organization of this dissertation.

Organization of Dissertation Chapters

This dissertation is organized to provide a background of past research and methodological choices and then offer original research followed by analysis. Chapter Two offers a literature review where I explain the major postulates of structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), and how communication scholars have appropriated it in several research traditions. I discuss the opportunities and drawbacks to these appropriations. I then focus on several opportunities to extend theory. First, I argue that the use of structuration in organizational communication research is often not critical, although the theory is well suited for critical analysis. Second, I argue that organizational communication change research favors the investigation of planned top-down change initiatives and this study offers a unique understanding of collaborative change strategies. And finally, current research does not often address educational organizations and their unique roles in our society, and this research offers an important understanding of the public higher education context. In light of these opportunities, I situate my research, and my specific research questions.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology I used for this research, providing an explanation of the qualitative case study approach from an *engaged advisor* perspective using multiple strategies for data collection. In this chapter, I also give a general

background and description of the case and its context. Then, I provide further rationale for my research questions that were co-created with UP. Finally, I explain each of the three specific methods I employed to gather data: interviewing, participant observation, and historical research. Within each method, there are specific details about the process including (a) the participants, (b) the data collection, and (c) the process of data analysis. I also offer an explanation of my role as the researcher and how my perspective is implicated in the research.

In Chapters Four, Five, and Six, I present my data analysis. Chapters Four and Five are similarly organized and create the foundations of this study. I discuss the structuration of UPartner's activities, bracketing the important work of "partnership" into its own chapter. These chapters also consider structural properties of the social systems of democracy and the market. Chapter Six is organized differently, wherein I present three contradictions that UP faced in their work to change the structures of the public university system. I discuss each contradiction, what it means, and then explain several desired new discourses that participants believed could create change. In this way, Chapters Four and Five create a foundation of structuration, and Chapter Six looks at contradictions and strategies for change.

Finally, Chapter Seven provides a conclusion to the research, and summarizes the study's findings, broadening the focus back to the larger contexts in which this project was situated. I return to the absences in the literature that I highlighted in the beginning of this dissertation, and discuss how this case contributed to the literature. In the spirit of my methodology, I offer descriptive advice to UP and finally, I review my implications for future research and a brief personal reflection.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

In this literature review, I outline the major postulates of structuration theory (Giddens, 1984). Then, I focus on the application of the theory in several strands of organizational communication inquiry, and explain how this study extends the application of structuration theory to the deconstruction of power and can be a powerful tool for strategizing transformations in organizations where there are obvious and dysfunctional power imbalances. I also argue that this research project offers an extension of structuration theory in terms of organizational change. Finally, this study extends the application of structuration theory to an educational context, which is significant in the negotiation of power and privilege, and inscribes preferred ideologies while also silencing others.

Major Postulates of Structuration Theory

Structuration theory (Giddens, 1979, 1984) is a lengthy, detailed, and systemic theory. In particular, a structuration approach answers numerous calls for systemic inquiry in organizational communication research (Banks & Riley, 1993; Golden, Kirby, & Jorgensen, 2006) because it highlights discourse involving rules and resources on multiple levels of social systems (Giddens, 1984). Poole and McPhee (2005) argue that structuration theory offers an understanding of how multiple levels of analysis, such as

societal, organizational, group, and individual communication, relate to one another. For example, it can help a researcher to understand how market ideologies are connected to discourse in an organization ("Students are paying tuition and deserve to get the best product possible") and even help illustrate the ideology's and organization's relationship to interpersonal discourse ("Why are you skipping class? You paid for it!").

The theory of structuration is comprehensive and unfolds in two major works, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Giddens, 1979) and *The Constitution of Society* (Giddens, 1984). Giddens (1984) writes that the core of structuration theory lies in the three concepts of: (1) structure, (2) system, and (3) duality of structure. In this section, I first discuss these guiding concepts, how they relate to partnership, and how they shaped my first research question. Next, I discuss the concepts of agency and power, and discuss structural contradictions. I explain how the concepts relate to a focus on transformation and how they shaped my second research question.

In the following two sections, although I describe how theory leads the formulation of my research questions, I want to stress that the questions were first and foremost guided by my collaboration with UPartner, and my desire to produce engaged research that would be practically meaningful to the organization. As I will discuss in Chapter Three, the decision to apply structuration was a secondary concern to developing research questions from engagement, in the spirit of engaged communication scholarship (Barge & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008; Cheney, 2008; Cheney et al., 2002; Simpson & Seibold, 2008). However, as I collaborated with UPartner regarding their interests, I realized that structuration was a useful theoretical framework that could provide practical insight.

Structure, System, and the Duality of Structure

The first of Gidden's (1984) three core principles, *structure,* refers to the rules and resources that knowledgeable human agents instantiate in their everyday practices. Giddens concept of structure is often confusing because it is not the same as general understandings of a structure, such as a building on campus. In structuration theory, structures are not concrete, tangible, or codified – they are language and resources in use, and are constantly changing. There is no such thing as a permanent structure, and the only external evidence of a structure is the instantiation of a social practice (Giddens, 1984). Structures also exist as memory traces, eluding observation. Depending on the situation, I draw upon my memory traces and resources to guide my communication. Therefore, it is more accurate to say that the way we communicate follows discursive patterns and practices (Harter et al., 2005), is inextricably tied to resources, and has *structural principles* that are either reproduced or changed in every interaction (Giddens, 1984). For example, in university courses in the U.S., one pattern is that professors typically run classrooms and not community residents. The professor has powerful resources such as advanced degrees and the ability to sanction students and assign grades, which are connected to material realities such as scholarships. Community residents who want to earn a degree must take classes where this power relationship has been patterned over centuries. The pattern follows the structural principles of education systems. The majority of faculty members in higher education embody a normative model of teaching and learning, and 83% of all faculty members across disciplinary borders report using lecture as the primary model in college classrooms (Butin, 2006).

Again, a structure is comprised of two inseparable parts. “Rules” constitute meaning and also sanction social conduct; they act as conversational norms and social practices and cannot be conceptualized apart from “resources” (Giddens, 1984). Banks & Riley (1993) write, “Resources are the capabilities of agents to generate command over other persons’ social conditions (called authoritative resources) and to generate command over material entities (allocative resources)” (p. 173). While allocative resources are material and often financial, Poole and McPhee (2005) write that authoritative resources are nonmaterial, pointing to skills or knowledge. Giddens (1984) offers three major comparisons between allocative and authoritative resources: 1. allocative resources are “material features of the environment” while authoritative resources are “organization of social time-space,” 2. allocative resources are “means of material production/reproduction” while authoritative resources are “production/reproduction of the body,” and 3. allocative resources are “produced goods” while authoritative resources are “organization of life chances” (p. 258).

Therefore, the combination of rules connected to resources *structures* a professor’s work. In higher education, the activities of students, professors, and administrators are routinized, and their ability to garner resources creates a social hierarchy through interaction. Poole and McPhee (2005) note that, “Organizations present us with a ready-made stock of structures and other employees who are willing to show us how they figure in organizational practices (p.178).” Tenured employees with significant resources (e.g. salaries, leadership positions, office space) can work to reinforce the rules of the organizational environment and help to create an even more rigid structure. Older professors who know the rules and often have more resources tell

newer ones "the way things are," or how to reproduce the structures they need to be successful in the system.

Giddens (1984) points out a key aspect of structures: "Structure is not to be equated with constraint but is always both constraining and enabling" (p.25). Therefore, while structures can help organizational members be successful, they can simultaneously create limits to innovation and creativity. While is it helpful to know "how things are done" at a new workplace, those structures can then also constrain alternative choices. Giddens (1984) argues that there are three main types of constraint: material constraint, negative sanctions, and structural constraint. Material constraints are the physical limits of the material world and human body, negative sanctions are punitive responses between agents, and structural constraint means the contextual limits of a situation. These three types of constraint show that structures are neither wholly enabling nor constraining but are more complex blends.

In regard to the second concept of *system*, Giddens (1984) writes, "The social systems in which structure is recursively implicated, on the contrary, comprise the situated activities of human agents, reproduced across time and space" (p.25). The addition of a time and space element and the implication of a multiplicity of activities make this concept more complex. The *system* of a public university involves numerous *structures* that have been patterned and naturalized over time. In this way, the structures *organize* – they are mechanisms constituting and reinforcing the boundaries of the organizational system. Again, such systems are not fixed nor material, they are produced and reproduced in social practices and patterns and are flexible and malleable even when they appear to be immutable. In other words, they can be reproduced or transformed.

In this research, participants discussed how UP worked mainly in two systemic contexts: campus/university (the terms were used interchangeably, and I also use them as such in my analysis) and community, which corresponded to the construct of "campus-community partnership." It may seem problematic to essentialize "campus," "university," or "community" because of the great amount of nuance within and between each system. Furthermore, there were multiple communities and multiple higher education organizations in the city that I studied. However, in this study, participants drew upon these terms and invoked these two larger social systems. Therefore, as Dempsey (2009) argued, "The campus/community divide is useful to the extent that it makes evident the divergent goals and multiple, sometimes conflicting, accountabilities of each participant" (p.23). In this research, the divide was frequently invoked as an important way for participants to orient themselves in order to then generate ideas for systemic change.

Giddens (1984) argues that social systems stand out because they are (1) clustered, (2) are often associated with specific locales or territories, (3) have normative elements that include legitimacy occupation of the locale, and (4) their members have some sort of common identity. The "university" and "community" of this project fit this definition. Both systems were clustered, often distinguished by their east/west physical locales (the university was concentrated in an eastern physical location and UP communities were defined by a group of western zip codes which physically adjoin each other), there were struggles over legitimate occupation of both locales (as I will show in my analysis), and there were some common identity markers of "university" people and "community" people.

In structuration theory, daily interactions are guided by a rich structural history that we carry with us in memory traces and reproduce in social practices. The more structures are repeated, the more they become sedimented and naturalized in our memories. For example, I have been attending public universities for 11 years. The fact that I can anticipate and participate in such a system gives me ontological security, a sense of safety and reduction of anxiety (Giddens, 1984). When I think about other public universities I might visit or work at in the future, I will know what to expect and how to prepare myself to be successful. Thus, while systems can be seen as confining and controlling to those who are unfamiliar, they can also be comforting to those who know how to reproduce important structures. Because I understand the structures of public higher education well, I feel more secure and ready to succeed. If those structures changed, I could become uneasy and feel less secure. In other words, those who benefit from the security of structures could, in the interest of remaining comfortable, create resistance to systemic change.

In addition to *structure* and *system*, the final core element of structuration theory is the *duality of structure*, which means that structures both produce and reproduce social systems and practices (Giddens, 1984). With every communicative choice, we either reproduce patterns, or produce new ones. Cohen (1989) equates this to a social praxis of everyday life, as numerous members of a group or social collectivity embed an awareness of such praxis deep within their memory. For example, as I will elaborate on in my analysis, UP participants made jokes about the university as an "ivory tower." To elaborate, "Long has academe been described as the "ivory tower," an isolated, formidable structure constructed by the work of individual members, simultaneously

uniting those within and dividing them from those without" (Broadfoot et al., 2008, p. 325). This metaphor invokes larger discourses of socioeconomic class, race, and traditional patterns of academic production where professors need to be isolated from the rest of society. Giddens calls these larger discourses "structural properties" because they draw upon institutional patterns reproduced over space and time. Examples of structural properties that communication researchers have discussed include meritocracy and masculinity in everyday communication about workplace benefits (Kirby & Krone, 2002), and "Mayberry" and "Not in My Backyard" discourses in everyday communication about homeless youth (Harter et al., 2005).

Thus, a productive aspect of the duality of structure is that it acknowledges both everyday talk (structures) and also larger social influences (structural properties) on the choices that people make. Giddens (1984) explains the duality of structure in more detail by arguing that there are three *dimensions* of structure: norms (*legitimation*), codes of meaning (*signification*), and the *domination* dimension of structure, what H.E. Canary (2010a) calls, "authoritative and allocative resources that coordinate human and material aspects of activity (p.29)." Banks and Riley (1993) explain that the dimensions capture relations among concrete present action and systemic modes of discourse, interrelating communication in the here and now to institutional level discourse. These three dimensions of structure connect to everyday interaction through *modalities*:

> Specifically, *norms* serve as the modality that facilitates the recursive relationship of action and the legitimation dimension of structure. *Interpretative schemes* facilitate connections between action and the structural dimension of signification. Finally, *facility* (involving authority and resource allocation) facilitates the structure-action relationship within the domination dimension.
> (H. E. Canary, 2010a, p. 30)

The concept of modalities is useful because they explain the forms of knowing that mediate between everyday interaction and structural properties of social systems (Banks & Riley, 1993). They are the "central dimensions of the duality of structure in interaction" (Giddens, 1979, p.81). Although Giddens (1984) explains these as distinct, he notes that they are only distinct for analytical purposes, and invoking such dimensions will suspend analysis in a particular space and time.

In this study, in order to guide foundational understanding of an organization that worked toward campus-community partnership, I wanted to understand the structuration of the organization's activities in this particular space and time as they concluded their ten year strategic plan and were in the process of creating a new one. The focus on activities of organizational participants has both practical and theoretical significance. As a result of engaging with the organization on their interests, as I will explain further in the next chapter, the organization was interested in how participants were making sense of the work of UNP. In other words, when participants discussed what UNP was doing, what were the common activities that they discussed? This question could help the organization see commonalities among participants, understand what was working, and determine what they could work on in their next strategic planning cycle. In short, it could help the organization's members to understand their own activities, and their own communication better (McPhee & Zaug, 2001).

Furthermore, drawing on Giddens, McPhee and Zaug (2001) argue that there are four "flows," or constitutive communication processes, that constitute organization. Researching how participants talk about their work can reveal evidence of such flows. The desire to understand how participants discuss the activities of UP directly relates to

the flow of activity coordination (McPhee & Zaug, 2001). In activity coordination, participants communicate about their manifest purposes and how they are working toward them, as opposed to formal structure that dictates what work should entail:

> For example, members can coordinate on how not to do work, or coordination may be in abeyance as members seek power over one another or external advantage for themselves from the system. Nonetheless, what seems inescapable is that members presume that they are working not just on related tasks but within a common social unit with an existence that goes beyond the work interdependence itself (McPhee & Zaug, 2001, p. 1).

Therefore, a focus on how participants structure their activity also allows important insight to the constitution of organization, and important local understanding about the work of partnership. It also allows for an analysis of how such structures can be both enabling and constraining to organizational participants. In light of this, the first research question of this study is:

> RQ1(a): How do UP participants characterize the organization's activities?
> RQ1(b): What kinds of rules and resources do participants draw on, reproduce, and want to transform?

In the next section, I continue an explanation of structuration theory, highlighting several concepts that assist in the understanding of partnership's concern with organizational change, and leading to my second research question.

Agency and Power

The second overarching concern of this study was a critical concern with how campus-community partnerships strategized how to overcome systemic barriers in higher education and create change. In this section, I discuss several features of structuration theory that inform a critical analysis, including a discussion of agency and power. Critical analyses are centrally concerned with power and resistance and the development

of alternative practices to address and challenge power imbalances (Mumby, 2008). Later in this chapter, I explain critical analysis further and review how critical scholars have used structuration theory, culminating in the argument that this study can augment that conversation. However, by way of introduction, I first explain two structuration concepts that are particularly interesting in a critical project, and in the context of campus-community partnership. These three concepts lead to my second and final research question.

First, the notion of agency is central to a critical project using structuration theory. Giddens' development of the theory rose out of a dissatisfaction with functionalist determinism that marginalizes agency and postmodern voluntarism, which overemphasizes agency. Giddens (1979) instead desired a vision of agency as intervention into a potentially malleable world, related to praxis. He argued that humans are competent actors with "practical consciousness" who, if prompted, can nearly always identify their intentions, if not their inherent motivations (Giddens, 1984). Cohen (1989) noted that, "Social practices do not reproduce themselves, social agents do, and it must be borne in mind that from the standpoint of structuration theory social agents always are seen to retain the capability to act otherwise than they do" (p.45). This feature of structuration theory – to act otherwise and intervene in the world - opens the possibility for structures and systems to be transformed. For example, this possibility is commonly invoked when communication educators teach students that they can attempt to "interrupt" hegemonic communication patterns, acknowledging that students have agency and that *there is an underlying structure to be interrupted.*

Structures, however, can be difficult to interrupt. Through their repetition and history, they can become so sedimented that they seem natural and permanent. The structure of professors leading a class can feel incontrovertible or even indelible, causing significant barriers to change. I may think, "That's just the way universities are," instead of recognizing that, "That's just the way university structures have been reproduced throughout history to the point where I can't remember why." Furthermore, as I mentioned earlier, those naturalized structures serve to comfort many individuals and maintain power. Mumby (1987) writes that, "In the context of organizations, power is most successfully exercised by those who can structure their interests into the organizational framework itself" (p.119). This creates a situation where powerful interests are continually reproducing structures that serve them (Mumby, 1987).

Indeed, because of this concretization of structure and resistance to change, Giddens (1984) has been generally criticized for being too optimistic about personal agency and ability to create change (Poole & McPhee, 2005). Conrad (1993) argued that he "excessively deemphasizes material and other constraints on human action" (p.199). However, Giddens (1984) acknowledged the possible constraints on personal choice in the form of material constraint, threats of punishment, and structural constraint due to minimal structural possibilities. For example, I may want to give all UP participants college credit for helping me with this study, but I may not have the resources to do that (material constraint), I could get in trouble with my department chair (threat of punishment), or perhaps there is not a way in the university system to allocate the credit to community members that are not enrolled (minimal structural possibilities). In other words, I may not have enough resources to create change.

Power in structuration theory is a relational process, and is instantiated in action through the duality of structure (Giddens, 1979). He writes, "… understood as transformative capacity, power is intrinsically related to human agency. The 'could have done otherwise' of action is a necessary element of the theory of power" (p.92). He goes on to note that power is a transformative capacity because it involves the ability of an agent to gain compliance with others and create dependence (Giddens, 1979). Agents exercise power through the mobilization of resources, which are the media through which power is exercised and through which structures of domination are reproduced (Giddens, 1979). For example, the significant resources of faculty members at universities often exercise power over students and reproduce superior-subordinate relationships. However, students always maintain agency:

> Power within social systems which enjoy some continuity over time and space presumes regularized relations of autonomy and dependence between actors or collectivities in contexts of social interaction. But all forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors. This is what I call the *dialectic of control* in social systems. (Giddens, 1984, p.16)

In this study, the public university is positioned as an institution that has enjoyed continuity over space and time, creating relationships of autonomy and dependence. However, campus-community partnerships want to change such patterns, and bring the voices of traditionally subordinated stakeholders (i.e., community members) to bear in influencing the activities of superiors (i.e., administrators). In other words, partnerships are an interesting type of organizing that highlights the dialectic of control and focusing on contradictions offers a useful way to consider how power differences are negotiated.

Contradiction

A final concept in structuration theory that facilitates a critical orientation is the notion of contradictions. Giddens (1979) defines structural contradiction as "an *opposition or disjunction of structural principles* of social systems, where those principles operate in *terms of each other* but at the same time *contravene one another*" (p.141, author's emphasis). Here, Giddens uses the example of private capital accumulation and public government, apropos in this research. H.E. Canary (2010a) explains structural contradiction and this simultaneous acceptance and rejection of structural principles in more specific terms regarding public policy:

> That is, individuals and organizations depend on regulations and controls provided by public policies, while at the same time these individuals and organizations reject being completely controlled by policy and strive for autonomy in how policies will be interpreted and implemented. (p.35)

Here, Canary (2010a) points to the long enduring structural contradiction of control versus autonomy. This explanation of control versus autonomy in regard to public policy bears similarity to the work of campus-community partnership, which depends on a relationship with a campus, yet rejects being completely controlled by university structures and desires to have leverage in changing university structures.

Giddens conceptualization of structural contradiction helps understand macro scale tensions such as public versus private and control versus autonomy. H. E. Canary (2010) extended the structurational view of contradictions in her development of Structurating Activity Theory (SAT). By pairing structuration with cultural-historical activity theory, Canary (2010) directed attention to more specific systemic contradictions that occur both within and between activity systems. In SAT, there are four types of contradictions. First, *primary contradictions* are similar to Giddens (1984) concept of

structural contradictions, and exist due to oppositional elements within system features (H.E. Canary, 2010b). H.E. Canary (2010b) gives the example of students in educational systems, because students simultaneously create revenue while also generating costs. Next, *secondary contradictions* occur when a new element is introduced in a system and causes tension between system elements to the extent where system elements and practices have to transform (H.E. Canary, 2010b). This type of contradiction could occur if departments introduced a requirement for a faculty member to teach one course on community based research (CBR) per year. While faculty may have already felt the need for this type of course, the new requirement would highlight latent tensions about CBR and require transformation of the system. Thus, in primary and secondary contradictions, tensions exist within a system, and can be managed, ignored, or resolved through some transformation of system elements.

The next two types of contradictions introduce further complexity. *Tertiary contradictions* relate to completely different ways of viewing the object, or goal, of an activity system (H.E. Canary, 2010b). These type of contradictions cannot be resolved by status quo system resources and practices – they require transformation in order to be resolved (H.E. Canary, 2010b). For example, this type of contradiction could be seen in tenure processes, where university members often judge success as academic publication. If tenure requirements changed the definition of success to require the inclusion of community members in research, teaching, and service, then faculty activities would have to transform in order to resolve the contradiction. Faculty could not maintain the status quo without risking their jobs.

Finally, *quaternary contradictions* emerge between activity systems when one system's goals are hindered by another system's goals (H.E. Canary, 2010b). In other words, this type of contradiction emerges when systems interact. Quaternary contradictions abound in campus-community partnerships, such as when two systems like the UP community and the university attempt to come together and work together. While the goals of the two systems are often complementary, UP's expressed desire to address "systemic barriers" in higher education foreshadows significant contradictions between systems and system goals.

One of the key features of contradiction in SAT is the assertion that, "Contradictions are generative mechanisms for the communicative construction of policy knowledge as individuals interact to resolve contradictions in the policy process" (H. E. Canary, 2010a, p. 36). However, contradictions can also stymie development and change in policy processes (H. E. Canary, 2010b). In this research, I examine how the frame of system contradictions may also extend to understanding how participants in campus-community partnerships experience and grapple with contradictions in their efforts. Furthermore, when faced with contradictions, how do partnership participants resolve contradictions to create a more favorable balance of power? This leads to my second and final research question:

RQ2(a): What contradictions do UP participants encounter in their work?
RQ2(b): How do participants plan to leverage power and resolve contradictions?

While my research questions were informed by engagement and structuration theory, several other strands of inquiry informed this study. In the next section, I discuss the appropriation of structuration theory in organizational communication, with a focus on interpretive applications of the theory, particularly in studies of organizational change.

Then, I discuss critical applications and opportunities for critical extensions of the theory in cases such as educational institutions.

Structuration and Traditions of Organizational Communication

As mentioned in the introduction, communication features so prominently in structuration theory, Banks and Riley (1993) proposed it as a center point for organizational communication studies. Structuration research has a strong tradition in organizational communication beginning even before Banks and Riley's (1993) argument that it should be the ontology for our discipline's research. Structuration theory, as explained in the previous section, was an attempt to reconcile two conflicting conceptions of agency. Therefore, structurationist research cannot be faithfully applied to functionalist nor postmodern inquiry. For example, creating a survey instrument that identifies structures would reveal a fundamental misunderstanding of Giddens concept, because structure is never fixed, but is created and recreated through social practices. Postmodern inquiry would also be an inappropriate pairing with structuration theory because it eschews the idea that there are distinct structural foundations of organizational life (Ganesh, 2008). Therefore, structurationist inquiry in organizational communication is most aligned with interpretive and critical applications (Poole & McPhee, 2005). Several notable scholars have offered reviews of structurational inquiry in organizational communication (Banks & Riley, 1993; Poole & McPhee, 2005). In this review, I seek to highlight the strengths and opportunities of interpretive and critical appropriations of the theory.

Interpretive Applications of Structuration Theory in Organizational Communication

Interpretive research programs using structuration have employed the theory to gain understanding and work toward description of a wide range of communicative phenomena such as identification processes (Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998), argumentation in groups (D.J. Canary, Brossman, & Seibold, 1987), attributes of formal structure (McPhee, 1985), and organizational culture (Riley, 1983; Witmer, 1997). Two major traditions of organizational communication inquiry taking an interpretive approach that are of particular interest to this study are decision making research and research on organizational change.

Research using structuration theory examined decision making processes first in face to face encounters. Poole, Seibold and McPhee (1985) argued that group decision making was a structurational process. Instead of viewing decisions as being made based on the use of fixed rules and roles in a group, structuration inquiry suggested that a decision making process be seen as the choice, in every interaction, to reproduce the structure or change the process through a new communication choice. This line of inquiry includes empirical investigation of arguments in group decision making (D.J. Canary et al., 1987; Meyers & Brashers, 1998), group decision making on juries (Sunwolf & Seibold, 1998), and group decision making in the semi-conductor industry (Browning & Beyer, 1998).

Another important strand of interpretive organizational communication research that is germane to this case study is research using structuration theory to explain organizational change efforts. In using the theory toward this purpose, it is important to understand *how change efforts purposely attempted to change structures and systems*.

While experimental research designs could look at whether or not a change happened, structuration research is more useful in explicating the change *process* through a focus on language choice. This strand is theoretically and practically compelling, as change processes can be complex and dynamic, and can create significant emotional and financial strains on organizational participants.

Organizational communication scholars have investigated some large-scale change attempts to change the entire "story" of an organization. Sherblom, Keränen, and Withers (2002) offered an account of an "externally pressured, unplanned change" in the game warden system in Maine. These change efforts focused on a public relations overhaul, improving the image of game wardens and changing hiring practices so that they became a more ethnically and culturally diverse agency. They found on several levels - interagency, internal hierarchy, relationships with the public, and relationships of game wardens to each other – that there were related conflicts symptomatic of deeper institutional tensions over the change.

The Sherblom et al. (2002) study recognized that structures that were historically sedimented required more attention. For example, the traditional view of a game warden was "a way of life" (Sherblom et al., 2002, p. 150):

> The more traditional wardens we observed know their territory and the people who live and recreate there. They are experts having a great deal of practical knowledge about the physical terrain and the lives of people in the area as well as about the wildlife. (Sherblom et al., 2002, p. 151)

However, with the new changes in the game warden system, wardens were required to take on new responsibilities such as drug enforcement, and they went from being independent experts to part of a bureaucracy that they had little part in shaping. The authors found that the game wardens' rules had changed without changing resources such

as help or weapons, causing significant tension and unrest. Older, more experienced wardens began asking for assignments at isolated locations where the changes were slower to be implemented. Many wardens retired, and as a result the tension between the old and new warden system endured. The relevance of these findings to a study of university change is striking. Here too there are traditional views of the professoriate (Boyer, 1990), and partnership is also asking for radical changes from a historically sedimented and government related organization. However, by contrast, partnership works collaboratively to create change.

Another study using structuration to investigate organizational change is Goodier and Eisenberg's (2006) account of a healthcare organization whose leaders decided to significantly change the organization to an "avowedly spiritual" organization. Leaders participated in an offsite workshop to learn how to effect this change, and then came back to the organization and implemented their top-down change. The authors focused on how organizational members came to tell a new story of work and create new spiritual structures (Goodier & Eisenberg, 2006). By changing communication patterns that shaped and framed their work, the leaders of the organization were largely successful in their change efforts (Goodier & Eisenberg, 2006). However, in their analysis, the authors voiced some concern about whether employees believed in the changes, or merely performed spirituality to please the leadership. This caveat draws attention to the fact that employees were not involved in strategizing the change; therefore, the researchers did not have complete trust in the change outcomes. Again, by contrast, this study offers an account of a collaborative process.

Jian (2007) investigated planned top-down organizational change in an

international financial group, and found that employees felt shocked, betrayed, and thought they were treated unfairly. Employees needed to create their own new story of work and change their own working structures. However, this process was suppressed, avoided, or rejected by their supervisors. The author offered this recommendation:

> To facilitate system integration and manage tensions, senior managers should be able to create opportunities of employee participation in change initiation, attend to critical communication events by emphasizing dialogue and negotiation, and participate themselves in change implementation among local employee groups. Such two-way participation will foster shared interpretive schemes and transform tensions into constructive energy. (Jian, 2007, p. 25)

In this quote, the author acknowledged the power of collaborative work to change structures and lead to constructive transformation. He highlighted participation, dialogue, negotiation, and shared schemes. In this study, change efforts of partnership participants may differ from forced compliance as in Jian's case.

These studies offer a beginning, yet they all focus on change that was external or top-down and initiated by those who controlled significant resources. This dissertation project adds to the conversation by focusing on organizational change efforts that were based on a partnership model. In this study, change was a collaborative process, with ideas generated by lower levels in a hierarchy, and not mandated by external stakeholders or enforced by those in positions of organizational power. Furthermore, this study looked at change initiated by those without significant material resources and without the ability to force compliance. This focus will allow me to understand how those in lower power positions leverage, through social patterns and practices, different resources to gain power.

Interpretive studies using structuration have created several important research programs such as the investigation of decision making and organizational change.

However, early interpretive research using structuration theory was criticized as having a shallow engagement with explanatory mechanisms, what Banks and Riley (1993) termed the "*en passant* problem" (p.179, author's emphasis). Communication scholars were challenged to use structuration as an ontology, and to create more contextual theories of communication (Banks & Riley, 1993). Several research programs have emerged in this attempt. One very popular attempt is DeSanctis and Poole's (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994; Poole & DeSanctis, 1990) Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST), which built on Giddens' (1984) work, and has made a significant disciplinary and interdisciplinary impact. AST offers insight into communicative processes in decision making practices in an increasingly virtual society. The goal of AST is to first conceptually separate structures built into technology and the structures found in human action, and then determine the interplay between both. For example, DeSanctis, Poole and Dickson (2000) studied how groups appropriated decision-making features of a technology into their human interactions. A drawback of AST research is that the level of analysis can be so detailed that macro level societal forces that are such a key component of Giddens' theory are sometimes shortchanged.

Several other attempts to solve the *en passant* problem have been to pair structuration with another mid-level theoretical construct in order to arrive at more specificity. For example, Norton's (2007) work on public participation blends structuration with environmental public participation theorizing in order to build a mid-theoretical terrain. In addition, H.E. Canary's interpretive work on the structuration of policy (H. E. Canary, 2010a; H. E. Canary & McPhee, 2009) pairs structuration with cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) in order to create structurating activity theory

(SAT). This combination overcomes the critique that structuration does not adequately consider the ways that resources influence system actions and transformations (H.E. Canary, 2010). As discussed earlier, this project extends SAT's concept of contradictions as generative mechanisms foreshadowing organizational change. This project seeks interpretive understanding in its first research question, but also has a critical orientation, as explicated in the second research question. In the next section, I discuss why taking a critical approach will extend work on structuration in organizational communication inquiry.

Critical Applications of Structuration Theory in Organizational Communication

While most structuration studies in organizational communication have taken an interpretive approach, a few studies have illustrated the theory's critical possibilities (Harter et al., 2005; Kirby & Krone, 2002; D.K. Mumby, 1993). Poole and McPhee (2005) argue that, "Although we agree that more recent developments in Giddens's ST pay too little attention to inequities and dominance, the original foundations of ST provide a good framework for critical inquiry" (p.192). Deetz (2005) offers this summary of critical inquiry:

> Fundamentally, critical work encourages the exploration of alternative communication practices that allow greater democracy and more creative and productive cooperation among stakeholders through reconsidering organizational governance and decision-making processes. (p. 85)

As I have outlined in the concepts of agency, power, and structural contradictions, structuration is well equipped to guide a critical analysis. Also central to critical inquiry is the critique of domination and how people actively participate in their own subjugation

(Deetz, 2005). Domination is not irresistible, and dominant ideologies can be defied (Harter et al., 2005).

Despite its potential, only a few studies have investigated the value of critical applications of structuration theory. The abundance of interpretive accounts using structuration has created the impression among some critical and postmodern critics that the theory is too politically moderate (Corman, 2008). Corman (2008) argues:

> Giddens is a bona fide critical theorist. His books published prior to *The Constitution of Society* show that his perspective is more than adequately equipped for pursuing a critical agenda. At the same time he maintains that agents (to a greater or lesser extent, based on circumstances) have the power to act in ways other than that dictated by structure, and that even deeply sedimented structures are changeable through the accumulation of small actions, the influence of unintended consequences of action, and so on, casting doubt on the criticism that structuration is too conservative.

Therefore, it is important to locate the large accumulation of interpretive approaches on a spectrum of possibility, and continue to expand the spectrum to critical applications.

This study adds to critical applications of structuration theory and takes advantage of useful theoretical concepts that dissect power imbalances. Practically, neglect of the critical dimensions of the theory is significant because current interpretive research such as network applications of structuration and AST (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994), has offered immense practical benefit for management – making technology more efficient and profitable, creating powerful software products, and offering important public relations tools. In the critical spirit, the theory's power should also be leveraged by the traditionally underrepresented and under resourced groups in our society to make change.

There are a few notable examples of critical inquiry using structuration. Riley's (1983) study of political culture was one of the first to introduce structuration to organizational communication inquiry and take a critical perspective. However, the

study, while investigating office politics, and commenting on sexist structural properties, does not discuss alternative strategies for creating change. Another early appropriation of the theory is Mumby's (1987) account of narratives as symbolic forms that express organizational ideology and power. This account is another important step in critical theorizing, but because of its lack of applied empirical work, it also does not highlight structurational processes or suggest strategies for transformation.

Two more recent organizational communication studies offer important critical applications of structuration that inform this study. One example is Harter, Berquist, Titsworth, Novak, and Brokaw's (2005) investigation of how homelessness is structured through discourses of invisibility. In their study, community members argued that homelessness was not a problem in their neighborhoods, and therefore they did not need shelters built there. This tendency to deny the problem through "not in my backyard," or NIMBY, structures served to erase homeless youth from the conversation (Harter et al., 2005). On the other hand, homeless youth identified themselves as having "street smarts" (or resources) for escaping arrest and punishment, and took pride in these abilities (Harter et al., 2005). However, their street smarts kept them hidden, and therefore community members were able to continue to repeat NIMBY structures and deny they existed. The authors characterize this situation: "Through discursive defenses of space, communities at best make invisible (thus avoiding discussion of) homelessness and at worst embrace symbols of domination and exclusion" (Harter et al., 2005, p. 323).

To work toward transformation in their study, several nonprofits working in the area identified rhetorical impediments to transformation and actively strategized how to discursively interrupt structured patterns of invisibility (Harter et al., 2005). Their

change attempts involved changing the conversations about homelessness to include counter-narratives of homeless life and recognition of street smarts as a source of knowledge that could benefit school systems. Furthermore, nonprofits attempted to change the conversations by exposing the privilege of domiciled community members, and exposing NIMBY discourse as unethical and political, which they hoped would elicit guilt from those who perpetuated such patterns (Harter et al., 2005). This study has interesting parallels to partnership, because of the significant power imbalances that were addressed. Furthermore, much like homeless advocates valorize "street smarts," partnerships also valorize what could be seen as "community smarts," and see community members as possessing and creating knowledge.

Another study that bears a critical orientation towards structuration theory is Kirby and Krone's (2002) research that focused on the practice of employees taking family leave. They found that although an organization created a policy of allowing employees to take family leave, few actually used the benefit because of communicative structures in the organization that served to shame or blame others for creating more work for those left behind. In particular, they examined how family leave was not seen as a legitimate choice for many men. The authors shared quotes such as "Someone wanted paternity leave, and everybody laughed. I mean, they thought that was funny," and "I wanted to take two weeks [of paternity leave] and the supervisor was saying, "No, I don't think, you know, that's probably not a very good idea" (Kirby & Krone, 2002, p. 50). Although there was a formal policy that men could take paternity leave, these quotes show how, through interpersonal exchanges, coworkers structured this leave as a joke or as an inconvenience. These ways of structuring the leave then created an informal sense

of ridicule and shame for those who decided to take paternity leave.

Kirby and Krone's (2002) research demonstrates how documents that were created in top-down efforts (such as employee handbooks and mandates) subsequently took on a life of their own. It also shows the unique power of co-workers, who may or may not have significant resources but instead employ concertive control and leverage their resources to control others. In addition, the authors provide insight to societal discourses in the United States surrounding masculinity that trickle down into the workplace and effect benefit utilization (Kirby & Krone, 2002). This research about family leave is a powerful example that suggests that if employees do not participate in creating new policies, they may use their authoritative resources to resist such change, even when the effort was meant to be socially just. The current study can add to this critical scholarship while focusing on a university system. Giddens is particularly interested in "total institutions" (Goffman, 1957) or those that have significant power and very sedimented and naturalized structures, such as schools.

The public university context of this research is critically important and theoretically appealing. Although he admits that schools are not institutions of punishment and control like prisons, they should be carefully analyzed because they similarly delimit space and time arrangements (Giddens, 1984). This again begs the question as to the ideological purpose and function of those arrangements. In writing about the corporate colonization of democratic processes such as education, Deetz (1992) similarly argued, "The point is not to end education, but to more clearly understand on whose behalf it is carried out" (p. 28). School contexts are generally important to the field of organizational communication, yet underrepresented in the literature. Ashcraft

and Allen (2009) write that organizational communication scholars may have inadvertently surrendered the study of educational contexts to instructional communication scholars, and it is time we reclaim those opportunities. Structuration theory offers an opportunity to understand and critique these important organizational constructs.

As previously discussed, public universities have been criticized for blurring the public and the corporate, and their democratic functions are under question (Deetz, 1992). Although the "ivory tower" is a metaphor, universities are often geographically separate, and the location of a university is an important consideration that has an impact on resources. Those living near a university can access its classes and programs much faster and more easily (requiring fewer resources) than those living far away. Once students attend a university, they are often expected to conform to university agendas of class times, and will often be expected to sit in particular arrangements in classrooms. On a typical first day, students receive a syllabus that plots the entire course of their semester. Instructors and administrators make these location, time, and planning decisions for students, frequently without their collaboration. Critical pedagogy scholars often criticize these practices as undemocratic (Dewey, 1997; Giroux, 1988; Shor & Freire, 1987).

Like critical pedagogy, campus-community partnerships want to change how schools delimit time and space and operate according to sedimented rules and systems, and create a more egalitarian institution. However, this can create anxiety for those who are already comfortable with the status quo. For example, when a class is connected to community projects or research, rules and systems are interrupted and can disrupt ontological security. This happens in several ways: students and teachers leave

classrooms, they partner with and reciprocally learn from community members, they are physically active and not passive in class, their schedules are flexible, and unintended incidents and consequences abound. There are challenges and benefits to this process – partnership participants can feel nervous and unprepared and frustrated at a lack of predictability. However, the process can prepare students for future encounters with change, and teach them transformative tools to enact changes to university and community systems.

When teaching, research, and service move toward a partnership model, and partnership patterns become a part of a department culture, new structures can emerge in an institution that some argue is overly rigid and sedimented (Boyer, 1990; Dewey, 1997). To understand this attempt at transformation, there are several interrelated questions: What structures need to be interrupted to accomplish change? What structures reproduce traditional patterns of inequity? How can a university system advocate for embracing "community," and yet reproduce traditional ways of work that perpetuate the notion of an "ivory tower"? The university/community divide is often perpetuated, with "community" seen as outside the borders of our campuses (Dempsey, 2009). Structuration theory can provide an important way to understand how such discourses are sustained through multileveled analysis.

Conclusion

In this review, I outlined the major postulates of structuration theory and their current employ in organizational communication literature. I presented the core concepts of the theory, along with several concepts that make it a useful choice for the deconstruction of power. I argued that the bulk of work in organizational communication

employs structuration in an interpretive manner while the present study is organized in alignment with both interpretive and critical goals. Furthermore, investigating change efforts that are collaborative can help understand more options than top-down planned change. Finally, educational institutions are important and complex sites of power negotiations, and this research can lead to important transformations in public university systems. In the next chapter, I explain the methodology for this study, and revisit this study's three central research questions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the methods used in this research. I begin the first section by discussing the guiding approach of case study. Next, I discuss the critical perspective of this case study, and explain how I brought principles of engaged communication research to bear on the project. In this multiperspectival blend, I position myself as an *engaged advisor,* and explain this positioning and how it adds to my research. Then, I introduce the case in detail, and provide an explanation of the multiple methods I used to gather the data. Finally, I discuss my techniques for analyzing the data.

This chapter follows my own process of discovery, since the research questions that guide this study were co-created with UPartner (UP). Their concerns required a general understanding of the organization's activities and strategies, as well as specific understandings of particular communicative processes. After we determined the critical concerns of the study, I decided that structuration theory would be a useful lens, which was agreeable to the organization, and fulfilled the purpose of adding to my discipline's theoretical concerns (as discussed in Chapter Two). To show this process of discovery throughout the chapter, I explain the genesis of each question and how it was co-created through conversations with UP. I weave the two questions together, and explain both as I

progress through the chapter.

Case Study Approach

The overall approach to this research was to consider UP as a case study. While they were interested in theoretical knowledge, UP staff also desired practical outcomes from this research. In searching for a good approach to solving both theoretical and practical organizational problems, case studies have a long history in disciplines oriented toward theory/practice questions: business, education, nursing, and social work among others. Authors most frequently cited on case study research are in education (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 2008), organizational studies (Eisenhardt, 1989), and professional consulting (Yin, 2008). In all of these fields, there is a need for research outcomes to be practically useful as well as theoretically rich, and case study approaches have been proven to be successful in delivering such results. In organizational communication, case studies are often touted as an excellent way to apply theoretical knowledge to practice (Goodall, 1994; May, 2006).

Authors define case studies in different ways, depending on their field and the particular aims of study. Stake (1995) defined case study as a *choice of what is to be studied*, or "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p.xi). Merriam (1988) defined a case study as a *research design* used to systemically study a phenomenon. Eisenhardt (1989) writes that case study is a *research strategy* used to understand the dynamics present within one single setting. Finally, Yin (2008) is one of the few authors to consider case study as scientific, and defines case study as an *empirical inquiry* that is in-depth, real life, and binds a particular case to its context. Simons (2009) summarized this

debate: “In the literature on case study, different authors refer to case study as a method, a strategy, an approach, and not always consistently” (p.3).

Despite this range of conflicting definitions, they have several commonalities that apply to my research and made the approach the best choice. First, case studies explicitly acknowledge that drawing research boundaries is difficult. A case study researcher is acutely aware that boundaries are fictive and socially constructed, and can be contracted and expanded as needed. Hepp (2008) argued that, “Rather the “case” builds a kind of center for describing further contextualizing forces, which themselves take part in articulating the case.” Imagine using a website such as Google maps. Although you bind your search to one location, the tool allows you to look at that location from street level to global level. This is also possible in case studies – a case can be bound to a particular person, program, or organization, and then the author can add details that allow the reader to apprehend several levels of understanding and get a more holistic picture.

This holistic quality of case study makes it an appropriate choice for apprehending an organization through structuration theory. The organization can be the site of origin, and as a researcher, I can look at both interpersonal level discourse and societal level discourse in my “zooming” functions. Organizational communication scholars negotiate seeing an organization as a “container,” and yet also resisting containment. There are benefits to both views: acknowledging how an organization may be contained; yet also understanding how an organization resists containment. A case study approach allowed me to consider the benefits of both perceptions.

Case studies are well suited to answer complex research questions, questions that implicate several levels of understanding such as my concern with systemic change.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) explain that case study is especially appropriate to use in research that examines society and culture and focuses its inquiry on groups or organizations. In education, the use of case studies developed as a way to understand curriculum innovation and evaluation in complex environments, a process that was not easy to apprehend with experimental variable analytic research (Simons, 2009). The work of campus-community partnership can be seen as echoing the work of curriculum innovation and taking it even further to departmental and organizational innovation. In organizational communication, case study can improve analytical and critical thinking around complex challenges (May, 2006). This ability to illuminate complex issues is an excellent fit for structuration theory, a complex theory that implicates several levels of understanding; UP is a complex organization, implicating several levels of hierarchy.

Finally, case studies necessitate the use of multiple method combinations, and can include both qualitative and quantitative choices (Stake, 2008). There is no fixed way to methodologically approach a case study – the case study is flexible, open to co-creation, and subject to change, much like the work of partnership. This use of multiple methods allows for a deeper investigation of context and situation, an advantage given my particular research questions involving change attempts. To fully appreciate change attempts, it was important for me to employ a variety of strategies – interviewing participants, attending important events and board meetings, and reading organizational literature to get the best sense of the organization's structures and strategies. Furthermore, a case study with multiple methods allowed me to engage with participants over the course of an academic year, as I detail later in this chapter, and this longitudinal nature of case study complemented my inquiry into structuration processes.

Much like the choices of methodologies in a case study are flexible so is the choice of conceptual approach. Case studies can be social scientific, interpretive, critical, postmodern – they can be adapted to many different (and sometimes competing) perspectives. In the next section, I discuss how case study evolved from interpretive traditions, and several interpretive qualities of case study approaches are also seen in critical perspectives. Furthermore, I see this research as a critical case study that is informed by engaged communication research, and I situate myself as an *engaged advisor*. In the next sections, I explain this movement from interpretive to critical to engaged advising in more detail.

The Interpretive Roots of Case Study

Case study is rooted in naturalistic/interpretivist traditions that maintain that reality is best understood through careful attention and thick description using several qualitative methods (Merriam, 1988; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2008). In interpretivist case study traditions, the researcher's observations are partial and subjective, not meant to create a model for prediction or control. The overall goal of such inquiry is for the researcher to develop a thorough understanding of their subject of study. In terms of evaluation, the case study report should be able to recreate a situation that the readers can compare to their own experiences, often referred to as "transferability" (Stake, 2008). The goal of transferability is not to be confused with generalizability, whereas transferable knowledge can guide understanding of other cases, it does not claim to be a general argument for transformation or intervention (Stake, 2008).

Because of its concern with thick description and understanding, interpretive work can provide a foundation from which to develop initial definitions of terms. For

example, my first research question about how the activities of UP are structured is largely interpretive. Campus-community partnerships in higher education are a relatively new way of organizing, and there is not a significant body of literature on the subject. Therefore, in this study, I add to the development of some initial definitions of the term. In other words, I do some foundational interpretive work such as understanding how participants described their activities and the concept of partnership. Hawes (1977) argued that communication scholars need foundational interpretive work in order to build strong theories and avoid unnecessary confusion.

Although interpretive work aims for thick description, there is also an explicit acknowledgement that the description provided is both partial and subjective. Interpretive research outcomes are often referred to as metaphorical "quilts" or "crystals" or "bricolage," what Denzin and Lincoln (2008) explain as "a pieced-together set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" (p.4). For example, in trying to fully understand partnership, I used a variety of methods to understand everything I could about the situation. But, I acknowledge that there could be no way to know everything about the situation (I cannot be everywhere at once, perhaps information is being withheld, etc.). This report will be subjective because I chose what to pay attention to; a different researcher could have asked different questions or had unique observations. Again, the goal of an interpretive project is to create a thorough description in order to understand. The researcher does not offer advice in their report of what has been seen and heard in detail.

Because interpretive research seeks to understand and not advise, it allows the reader to make his or her own conclusions and choices. It attempts to avoid any political

affiliation, and is therefore perceived as a less biased form of qualitative inquiry. Stake (1995) considers interpretive case study as "non-interventive and empathic" (p.12). This empathy occurs if someone found a case study to be resonant with another case, again referred to as having "transferable" value. For instance, in reading about my understanding of UP, the reader may realize that UP is similar to their university's campus-community partnerships, and take steps to change, but in their own ways. In the next section, I argue that these tenets of interpretive research apply to my research, and I extended them to a critical perspective as an *engaged advisor.*

Critical Viewpoints

Interpretive research seeks to provide foundational, descriptive understanding from which to develop robust theories. This type of research has undeniable value that extends to the critical perspective and enhances its goals. In this section, I describe how I envisioned this case as a "critical case study" that echoes interpretive research in its thick description and understanding, but argues that there is a dominant reality and power imbalances that warrant critique. A critical perspective takes an active stance about organizational change (Deetz, 2005). Finally, I explain how recent conversations about engaged organizational communication research shaped what I envision as a new conceptualization of *engaged advisor*. Table 1 provides a comparative basis for my argument:

Table 1
Comparison of Interpretive, Critical, and Engaged Advisor Methodological Perspectives

Perspective	Interpretive	Critical	Engaged Advisor
Research Purpose	Description	Emancipation	Descriptive Advice
Nature of reality	Multiple realities	Dominant reality, power imbalance	Dominant reality, power imbalance
Role of researcher	Empathic	Activist	Collaborator

Like interpretive case studies, critical perspectives also seek to fully understand and describe reality. However, this purpose is subordinate to the greater goal of emancipation. Instead of the multiple realities that are the hallmark of interpretive perspectives, critical researchers argue that there is a dominant material reality, and that it is oppressive and conflictual (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Critical researchers are concerned with human beings and how they can transcend the constraints of an unequal society, which can be conceptualized in terms of class, race, gender, or other organizing forces (Creswell, 2009). For example, my introductory chapter introduced what I consider to be a problem: that market interests are dominating public universities to the detriment of community interests. This situation exists because market interests have a great deal of money and power in the United States. The purpose of description in critical research becomes a tool for emancipation, targeting this inequality and seeking to dissolve disempowering constraints. In this case, empowering community members to put greater pressure on public universities to make communities better places rather than make corporations wealthier.

The critical perspective has a strong tradition in the field of organizational communication, as I reviewed in the previous chapter. In critical organizational communication studies, Mumby (1997) argued that organizations are, "principal sites of meaning and identity formation where relations of autonomy and dependence, power and

resistance, are continuously negotiated amongst competing interest groups (p.345)." Therefore, in terms of methodology, how social institutions transform to overcome the historical problems of domination is of key concern (Cresswell, 2009). This matches the concern of my research on several levels – the exploration of the structuration of partnership as well as the exploration of how partnership participants imagine new discursive patterns and practices that would change the public university system into a more participatory organization.

Therefore, while the first research question of this study concerning how participants structure the activities of UP is largely interpretive, it leads to and relates with the second research questions and the overall critical concern of this study, which is how an organization that has a minority role and few resources in a public university seeks to create systemic change through the communicative practices and resources of its participants. Campus-community partnerships involve under-resourced groups working to have a greater stake in how a public university is structured. A critical perspective is most useful because *partnership work is a critical project* – it explicitly seeks to change the dominant system to be more participatory and socially just.[1] And, UP participants and staff desired for me to take a critical perspective in this research. In several conversations at staff meetings and throughout the interviewing for this project, UP participants were very interested in dissecting power imbalances between the university and its surrounding communities.

[1] The director of UP endorses critical race theory, which is centrally concerned with power imbalances and race. A review of critical race theory is beyond the scope of this project. I did not choose to use a critical race perspective in the current project nor a critical whiteness perspective. However, I believe that my critical perspective is compatible with such projects, and because my central concern was with organizational structure, a structuration lens was valuable.

Taking a critical perspective means that the researcher becomes an activist. As mentioned earlier, interpretive research is avowedly partial and subjective, and acknowledges that there are multiple realities, which allows the researcher to remain empathic yet detached (Stake, 2005). Because critical researchers believe in a material reality that is fundamentally imbalanced, their accounts are still partial and subjective, but their conclusions need to work toward creating a better balance. Critical researchers take a stance about what needs to change, and ideally take on an activist role to help change happen (Frey & Carragee, 2007). In this study, a critical researcher would intervene to offer tools to improve the work of UP and help them succeed in creating change. I would seek to empower the reader and promote transformation. Critical research hopes for reform, and believes it is possible (Deetz, 2005).

However, although this research does take a critical perspective, through my experiences with UP, I offer the new perspective of *engaged advisor*. This perspective emerged from a desire for this project to blend a critical perspective with UP's brand of "partnership," as well as answer recent calls in organizational communication for engaged communication research. Deetz (2008) wrote that, "Engaged scholarship announces our willingness to be in the world rather than about the world" (p.290) and argued that scholars should pursue engaged research in order to develop new and better ways to discuss and respond to current problems. He observed that the discipline of Communication is using an "impoverished language" that results from lack of research that is truly connected to communities (Deetz, 2008). Inspired by conferences held in Aspen, Colorado, a group of communication scholars have pursued this scholarship of engagement, a unique brand of community-based research. In the next

section, I discuss how engaged scholarship informs the present project.

Engaged Communication Research and Engaged Advising

The concern with engaged research is not new nor is it particular to organizational communication. However, in 2002, scholars in our field started to pay closer attention to issues of engagement. Two important turning points that year were the first *Aspen Conference on Engaging Communication in Practice* and the publication of a special journal issue of *Management Communication Quarterly* (MCQ), a journal Krone (2005) calls one of organizational communication's "big four." The conference in Aspen was convened with the purpose of determining whether or not the work being done in organizational communication was meaningful to practitioners. MCQ focused on translating organizational communication research into practice, and by way of responding to this theme, Cheney, Wilhelmsson and Zorn (2002) advocated for engaged scholarship: moving beyond the idea of taking current work and adapting it for practice (a translation) to creating research with practitioners (an engagement). The year 2008 marked another turning point of another special issue of *Journal of Applied Communication Research* wherein Barge and Schockley-Zalabak (2008) characterized engaged scholarship as addressing a *knowledge production problem* versus a *knowledge translation problem*: by producing knowledge in tandem with practitioners and communities, scholars result in theoretical advances that are more robust and publications that are more practically meaningful.

There is some debate over whether or not engaged scholarship is more ontological (Stohl, 2005), strategic (Cheney et al., 2002), or methodological (Barge & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008; Simpson & Seibold, 2008). However, in all these iterations, there are

three common features of engaged organizational communication scholarship. First, they all advocate for academics studying large, important social issues. Campus-community partnership seeks to infuse community involvement in research, teaching, and service because many communities are underrepresented at the university in the student body, faculty, and administration. Engaged researchers choose research topics as citizens in a larger society with a communal responsibility, seeking issues that are directly tied to large and practical social problems. This means that neither egocentric interests ("study what you love") nor corporate interests ("study what gets funded") guide research agendas, but rather larger community concerns guide which questions need to be answered.

A second line of commonality in engagement is the need to stress researcher reflexivity. For example, Barge and Shockley-Zalabak (2008) explain that researchers need to be reflective about their assumptions. This is a hallmark of most qualitative inquiry, but particularly important when considering large social issues. The concern with being reflexive in engaged work means recognizing and interrogating how the researcher also contributes to and reproduces social problems. For example, in looking at detrimental power imbalances in a university system and arguing for partnership, it is important for me to recognize how I have benefitted from a *lack of partnership*, and from experiences where, as a White woman raised in a middle class family, I have felt comfortable in educational settings surrounded by people who have been similar to me.

Finally, the third common feature of engaged research is that practitioners must be included in the development and design of the research. Simpson and Seibold (2008) want researchers to even execute the research together with practitioners. This creates a

different relationship between researchers and researched. Even though a researcher makes a choice to take a critical perspective, they could still remain detached from the organization with which they were working. A critical researcher's view could be didactic and even ma/paternalistic. In contrast, Seibold (2005) fashions engagement as an immersive process of working *with* and learning *with* stakeholders to *mutually* shape theory and consider reformulations.

Engaged communication scholarship offers significant benefits. Barge and Shockley-Zalabak (2008) wrote:

> When we engage practitioners in our theory and research, we are more likely to ask and address important questions that are of interest to them and develop more robust analyses and theories that will have greater relevance and practical import to the public. (p.253)

Deetz (2008) argued that engaged scholarship is co-generative theorizing, theorizing together in the spirit of generating and creating socially responsive knowledge. The result is a "recursive bridge" between the academy and practitioners, and ethically responsive research results (Simpson & Seibold, 2008).

However, because of its lofty goals, engaged communication scholarship is not simple nor is it done quickly. All engaged work is aspirational, so like any other project, this one encountered some constraints that made thorough engagement difficult. In terms of the three commonalities of engagement that I discussed, I chose a practical social issue. Later in this chapter, I am also self-reflexive about my own privileges of race, class, and educational experiences, and I discuss how I involved the participants in the development and design of the research. However, instead of theorizing together with participants, I chose a theory that was common to my discipline. UP participants did not object to this theory, but I also did not involve them in the theorizing I did as a result of the study. And,

although I met regularly with the organization and felt confident about the research, the dissertation "rules" created disengagement – I needed to be the sole author, personally do most of the research, and I will most likely leave this community for a job soon after it is done.

Therefore, because I cannot meet all the best practices of engaged research, but I blended some key elements into a critical study, I view my perspective as that of an *engaged advisor* which I define as a an approach to engaged communication scholarship where the researcher chooses large social issues, and works collaboratively with community stakeholders and practitioners in order to understand and critique detrimental power imbalances. An engaged advisor aims for thick description and understanding, yet also offers what I call "descriptive advice." "Descriptive advice" is advice from the researcher that offers suggestions to their collaborators for transforming power imbalances. This advice can draw upon previous theoretical work or approaches such as grounded theory or grounded practical theory (Craig & Tracy, 1995; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The most notable feature of "descriptive advice" is that the advice is solicited from collaborators.

Descriptive advice should be seen in contrast to *unsolicited advice*, wherein a critical scholar chooses an issue to study and offers recommendations to practitioners without being asked. For example, in a research project I worked with Veterans Upward Bound and had a difficult time getting the director to allow me to study them. As a result, when I went to offer my opinions to her, she was quite uninterested in my advice, and also defensive. I recognized that she considered my advice unsolicited, and it was perceived as an attack on her own knowledge of the organization. By contrast,

descriptive advice is collaborative and invited as an analytical asset. In working with UP, they asked me what I thought and encouraged me to take a critical stance. They welcomed input because I worked with them and tried to understand them. Descriptive advice recognizes that advice is personal and partial, and I want UP to take my suggestions as only my opinion to be weighed among their participants' knowledge and ideas.

In several ways, I collaborated with UP. As I explain next, the ways I interacted with the organization were attempts to build a recursive bridge, a term inspired by Simpson and Seibold (2008). I also use the term bridge, because, as you will see in the data, the concept of bridging community and university was very important to the organization. However, the bridge formed during this research was built slowly and from both sides of the stream. In most of my early interactions with UP, I was a learner – learning a great deal from them and offering very little in return. It was only in later stages of the project that I believed I could offer them some descriptive advice toward possible transformation. Many critical projects speak of emancipation as a goal for the researcher – the researcher emancipates their research participants. Yet, my participants emancipated me in several ways – freeing me from the geographical confines of campus, freeing me from the typical structures of a university, and freeing me from academic notions of knowledge and success. So, from the *engaged advisor* perspective, collaboration and not emancipation was the hallmark of the approach. Next, I introduce you to UPartner and discuss the evolution of the co-created research questions that guide this dissertation.

The Case of "UPartner" (UP)

The organization in this study is represented by a fictional name: UPartner (UP). Although the organization did not request absolute confidentiality or anonymity, I chose to fictionalize the name to attempt to add another level of protection to its participants. I promised all those interviewed and observed that they would remain anonymous. However, it was difficult to maintain absolute confidentiality about the organization's identity since it had been in operation for a decade and was seen as a national model of campus-community partnership by practitioners. Furthermore, I leaned on organizational documents and promotion in my analysis, which could also be linked to their identity. In short, the organization is almost too well known to go undetected by a discerning eye, but I closely guarded and protected participant identity, and only I knew the names associated with all notes and transcripts, which I kept in password protected files on my computer and hard drive.

UP was based at a large western public university in the United States and their mission statement was: "(UP) brings together University and west side resources for reciprocal learning, action, and benefit... a community coming together." Their website's home page, as of May 25th, 2011, also included the following text. The bolded words were bolded by the organization:

> (UP) sets out to redress historical inequity by understanding systemic barriers that have prevented access to higher education and to rewrite that history so that residents of the west side see themselves as holders and creators of knowledge.
>
> (UP) links seven ethnically and culturally rich West Side neighborhoods with the [university] to create pathways to higher education. The partnerships address issues of race, ethnicity, religion, political views, and geography that are important to understand on the journey to higher education. Our mission actively develops campus-community partnerships focused on:
>
> - Increasing opportunities for youth through education

- Creating initiatives to expand and support community leadership and resident empowerment
- Strengthening health, housing, employment, business, safety, and environmental capacities

In this description, the current conceptions of campus-community partnership that I discussed in the introduction are evident. The work involves under-resourced communities, focuses on collaboration, and attempts to change systemic barriers by "rewriting" history. Also, any mention of service is omitted, and there is a stress on community members as "holders and creators of knowledge." UP is an important case to understand for several reasons, including its development, location, and organizational chart. During this research, it was also at a crucial stage in its strategic planning cycle.

UP is both an academic department and nonprofit 501(c)3 organization committed to partnership with seven ethnically and culturally rich communities. A large western public university identified these communities by zip code in the year 2000 as having the lowest attendance on campus. They were also home to a third of the city's population, including seventy percent of its Latino community and eighty percent of its refugee population (Lindberg, 2010). At first, the then-president of the university and a community organizer met to discuss how to approach the neighborhoods, and were unsure how to proceed. Instead of creating a top-down plan for change, they decided that UP's efforts should be formulated through a reciprocal research process seeking to foreground community concerns. "The critical issues on which [UP] focuses its work emerged through nine months of extensive personal interviews with more than 250 local residents, representatives of local organizations, faith-based organizations, university faculty, students, and staff" (Hunter, Munro, Dunn, & Olson, 2010, p. 293).

Those 250 original interviews determined UP's location and focus. A frequent interview theme during this time of exploration was that the university was physically too far from UP communities and detached from their concerns. So, UP moved into a house in the middle of their target communities, which was donated by the city in 2002. This home has been their main office for a decade. One employee joked that when UP moved in and raised a giant university flag outside the house, many community members thought that their new neighbors were merely big football fans. Years later, UP has become an established presence. During this research, their office was staffed by bilingual employees and was open to community members who could walk in and request information about the university or any of the organization's partnerships.

The three core initiatives of UP, also established as a result of those original exploratory interviews, each had a particular goal that their partnerships worked toward. The first initiative was called "Youth Education and Success (YES)," and its focus was partnerships with schools from elementary to middle school to high school. These partnerships involved multiple levels including students, parents, and school employees. The YES initiative stressed college as a path for students at a very early age, believing that early exposure and repeated emphasis on higher education would lead to higher enrollment from UP communities. YES partnerships included having faculty members involved in research in local elementary schools, bringing students to the university on visits, involving traditional dance in public school curriculum, promoting the university in local parks, and many more partnerships.

The second core initiative of UP was "Community Leadership," and it focused on partnerships with community members and community organizations that expanded and

supported leadership in the community. For example, these partnerships included a local nonprofit leadership institute that was taught in both English and Spanish and was linked to faculty in several departments across the university. Graduates of that institute went on to teach continuing education courses and team-teach courses at the university in 2011. Another example was an arts and activism partnership that involved local teenagers who followed local policy making and engaged in activism through spoken word and fine art. This partnership attracted significant interest, grant funding, and local press for a host of issues including their support of undocumented citizens who wanted to attend the university.

The third initiative of UP was called "Capacity Building" and its partnerships were with local nonprofit organizations and community organizations that addressed material barriers to success such as healthcare, affordable housing, employment, and environmental safety. These partnerships included university Urban Planning courses that worked on projects identified by community members as important to urban planning and design. Also under this initiative was one of the most notable and controversial (as I will explain in Chapter Four) partnerships of UP, the "UP/Hopeland Partnership Center," commonly referred to as "Hopeland." This partnership was a 6-year-old initiative that was located in an apartment complex, and offered community meeting space, programs for children who worked with university students, citizenship education, and much more. In 2011, UP purchased a 10,000 square foot building for Hopeland to grow, and was trying to raise enough money to cover those costs. As I will discuss in Chapter Four, Hopeland grew so large and important to UP that sometimes the entire organization was referred to as "UP/Hopeland."

In addition to its location and formulation into three initiatives, another notable feature of UP was its advisory board. Unlike many nonprofit boards that are focused on fundraising, UP's board was a group of people that the organization considered to be important representatives who could offer advice. These representatives included members of the local community, employees of local nonprofit organizations working in their target area, and university faculty and administration. In that equation, two thirds of the advisory board was community connected and one third was university connected. However, there were some overlaps, since the entire UP staff is also at board meetings, and because many members play dual roles, such as community resident and faculty member, or community resident and student. Overall, the advisory board was meant to represent the broad constituency of UP and its many stakeholder groups.

The case of UP was also compelling because of the timing of the research. 2010 marked the 10th anniversary of the formation of UP, and therefore the organization was at the end of their 10-year strategic plan. During the course of my research, I was able to attend all the advisory board meetings of the second strategic planning cycle. This timing was excellent in terms of understanding the organization's change efforts, as I was able to hear many conversations about where UP had come from and where it was going. Furthermore, UP was glad to have me doing interviews and gathering data as another source of information for their strategic planning. The strategic planning cycle helped my entry as a researcher.

My relationship with UP began when I met with the director in the summer of 2010, and was invited to attend their fall retreat. At that meeting, the members of the organization expressed interest in engaging with me in this project, because, as I

mentioned, they were headed into the next decade of strategic planning, and could benefit from an outside look at their work. Since then, we have collaborated on the goals and methods of this project. I expressed an interest in organizational structure, and they expressed an interest in understanding how UP participants described their work and the range of perceptions about partnership.

At the fall retreat, the staff was interested in what they referred to as "language," and eradicating "deficit discourse" about UP communities. "Deficit discourse" is a term often used in critical race theory to refer to characterizations of communities that are focused on what they do not have rather than what assets they do have (Valencia, 1997; Yosso, 2002). For example, instead of saying someone cannot speak English (a deficit), I would focus on the fact that they can speak three other languages. Because I thought deficit discourse was an academic term that might be too specific for the purposes of data collection, we negotiated that I would attempt to discover first how people were discussing UP in general and how they were talking about partnership. Rather than assume the use of certain discourses, I would first attempt to understand the current perceptions of the organization and its work. The staff felt happy about that focus, and interested in what participants would say and whether the descriptions would be accurate and/or consistent. This led to the development of the first research question:

> RQ1(a): How do UP participants characterize the organization's activities?
> RQ1(b): What kinds of rules and resources do participants draw on, reproduce, and want to transform?

As I have discussed, the questions are in the parlance of structuration theory, which some of the UP staff were already familiar with. However, I did not choose this theory with UP, but instead made the choice myself because I felt it was a respected theory in

organizational communication that fit with the research interest. There are other choices of theories that could have fit with UP's concerns that were more familiar to the staff, such as critical race theory and critical whiteness theory, so the fact that I chose structuration is a point of departure from more ambitious conceptions of engaged research, such as co-generative theorizing (Deetz, 2008).

Secondly, staff members also expressed quite a bit of interest in UP's change initiatives, and discussed how changing the systems of the university was important. In the second decade of work, staff members were motivated by the idea of "systemic barriers" and system change. There was extended discussion of getting this type of transformative "language" into planning documents and being explicit about changing the university system as a goal. For example, staff members discussed a recent faculty member who worked closely with UP but left the university because his research was not valued in the retention, promotion, and tenure (RPT) process. Several staff members were upset to lose him, and motivated to change RPT policies to retain faculty who did partnership work. Through these conversations and ideas, I became interested in how UP participants planned to create such changes to the university system. I could see that they did not have significant material resources, and were in fact in the midst of a large capital campaign to raise funds. Thus, the second concern of this research focused on creating change through changing communication patterns and led to my final research question:

> RQ2(a): What contradictions do UP participants encounter in their work?
> RQ2(b): How do participants plan to leverage power and resolve contradictions?

Again, I posed this question in terms of structuration theory, which I believed to be the best fit given the staff's concerns. While no one objected to this theoretical frame, I did

not invite suggestions for alternative theories. However, I believed this choice would lead to the results they were seeking. Next, I will discuss how I collected data to address these questions.

Data Collection

Participant observation, interviewing, and document review were the three main methods for collecting data. These choices are consistent with leading scholars in interpretive and qualitative case study (Creswell, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2008). Furthermore, these methods complement structuration theory in their ability to get at interpersonal, organizational, and societal discourse. In this section, I explain each method of data collection, and show how my choices provided me the best opportunities to answer my research questions.

First, in order to apprehend the nature of the case, I acted as a participant observer with UP over the course of the 2010-2011 academic year. Participant observation is a reknown tool in qualitative studies (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), and allowed me to try and hear, see, and experience reality as a participant. Observations provided a greater understanding of the case (Stake, 1995). In my observations, UP participants were aware that I was there, and I sometimes interacted with the staff and people I was getting to know. In all my observations, I paid particular attention to the research questions of this study, and took detailed notes about how participants were structuring the activities of UP, in particular *partnership*, and also how they were talking about changing the university system in order to be more equitable.

My participant observations were both in formal and informal contexts. I attended several scheduled meetings including part of the Fall 2010 staff retreat, all

advisory board meetings of the year, two staff meetings (one with a marketing consultant who discussed UP's image), one meeting between the director of UP and the diversity committee of the university's Human Resources Department, and one Social Work class where UP's Director of Research and a UP board member gave lectures about UP. I also attended several UP public events including a capital campaign kickoff celebration, a tour of the Hopeland facility, a "Connecting U Days" event, a gallery opening at a partnership location, and part of a graduation ceremony for a UP leadership institute. These events are detailed in Appendix D, and entailed over 30 hours of observation. On all these occasions, I took detailed ethnographic field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) and audio recorded a few occasions: the social work class lectures and the speeches at the capital campaign kickoff. I chose these events with the UP staff, or through suggestions from their email updates to board members, all with the goal of the research questions - understanding how UP participants discuss the organization and partnership among different audiences, in formal and informal settings.

In addition to participant observation, I interviewed 23 key informants identified by UP staff as important organizational voices, and as typical representatives of the organization. These interviews allowed me to get at how participants made sense of UP's activities and understand the contexts in which participants lived and worked (Creswell, 2009). For each interview, I went to a place chosen by the participant as a comfortable location, which offered me many good opportunities to contextualize this case. For example, I met in UP communities at UP partner sites such as schools and community centers and coffeehouses. These opportunities were wonderful for me, because it gave me a chance to see where people felt comfortable, and perhaps allowed the participant to

relax. On several occasions, I was early to interviews and could observe some of the partnership activities. I also did many interviews at UP's office location, allowing me to talk with several people I ran into there and hear casual conversations.

The semi-structured interviews lasted from 60-90 minutes each. During the interviews, I worked to convey the attitude that the participant's views were valuable and useful (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). I interviewed the entire staff that was in place during the academic year (two staff members have subsequently left), as well as several university leaders and community leaders. I interviewed several UP "advisory board" members. In Appendix B, I list each person I interviewed, their general affiliation with the organization, and where the interview was held. In the analysis, I do not distinguish between the participants because listing their affiliations along with their comments compromised anonymity in several cases. Although separating types of participants could yield interesting comparisons, I did not have a large enough sample to embark on that project, and it was beyond the scope of this study.

The tone of all the interviews was generally positive, and the participants were willing to share their stories, although some stories caused emotional responses, as I will discuss in the analysis. I enjoyed the interviews, and often felt like I was having a casual conversation with a friend or work colleague. The participants were very interesting people, and extremely articulate and descriptive. This was a benefit, since it made the data I collected very rich and complex. Many participants were playful and interested in asking me questions and analyzing my questions. This playfulness seemed appropriate for partnership participants that were interested in collaboration. They wanted to hear from me too.

Hepp (2008) writes, "The critical potential of case studies, then, lies in the trajectory of taking specificities seriously while still contextualizing them in wider connections like power relations." To get at historical, economic, political, legal and aesthetic contexts, I gathered textual artifacts such as speeches about community engagement given by university leaders, local press coverage about UP, institutional rules and policies, and statewide and nationwide educational legislation to understand how other public universities are approaching community partnerships. I analyzed UP documents such as grant proposals, reports, UP generated publications, and former research on UP. Finally, I searched UP's presence on the internet – capturing current web pages as text.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data in respect to the study's central concerns of understanding how participants discussed (1) UPartner (UP), (2) partnership, and (3) how UP attempted to change the university system. All interviews and field notes were transcribed into texts and then printed out in order to create codeable data. This included fifty four pages of field notes and five hundred and ninety two pages of interview data. I employed structuration theory coupled with communicative theme analysis (Owen, 1984). I reviewed the data inductively for patterned responses, generating initial codes, and searching for themes that could be named and explained in the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I employed Foss and Waters (2007) qualitative coding process and first identified my units of analysis. For the first research question, my unit of analysis was any mention of UP's activities. Since partnership was so often mentioned, I had a very large pile of quotes mentioning partnership. For research question two, I looked for any discussion

about the future and any discussion of change. I broadly identified these units (activities, partnership, change) by highlighting the margins of quotations with three different colors. Next, I cut out all the highlighted data and put them into piles by color, making three large piles.

Next, I focused on one color pile at a time in order to generate codes. I reread each unit cut out in the color pile and labeled it with a one word summary code that closely matched the natural language of the participants instead of an analytical label of my own making. These codes kept the data at a literal level that could easily be inferred before applying any analysis or abstraction (Foss & Waters, 2007). For example, a participant discussed UP as, "It's always been about bringing the community and the university together," and I initially coded this "TOGETHER." I repeated this process with each unit cut out in that color pile.

Next, staying in that color, I sorted my codes into many small piles, putting exact matches together, such as a few "TOGETHER"s. For example, when analyzing discussion of UP, I had fifteen different piles of different ways participants described the organization, including a pile of characterizations I didn't quite understand or was unable to code, which I called "UNKNOWN." Foss and Waters (2007) argue that researchers should make fine distinctions first, before abstracting more general categories. After sorting all the distinct codes, I reflected on their similarities and differences, and then started to collapse certain piles that fit together logically. In this way, I moved from literal categories to slight abstraction, still staying close to participant's original intent. For example, the codes I used to get to the structure of *Connection* that I discuss in Chapter Four included "TOGETHER," "NETWORK," "CONNECT," "BRIDGING,"

and "PATHWAYS." At this point, I stopped abstracting because Giddens (1984) is highly critical of academics that "see" things that participants do not. While some qualitative researchers create creative schema, I chose to stay closer to original intents, which aligned with structuration theory's focus on repetition and also honored UP's commitment to collaboration.

Because of my structuration focus, I paid particular attention to communication patterns that were often repeated and stressed. I made several categories of patterns, and chose to report the strongest, or most frequently repeated, structures in the analysis chapters. In this process, I considered both the number of units in each category, but also the closest matches of what was being said. For example, the structure of *Reciprocity* that I present in Chapter Five was strong because it had many units in the theme, and as my examples show, the quotations were similar in phrasing. While some qualitative researchers find it useful to count units, this disregards possible nuances and contradictions within themes (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, I did not count units, but rather considered, as in structuration, their repetition and similarity.

For the first research question, I identified five strong themes and several other themes that were less frequent. For the second research question, I identified three strong themes and a few other less frequent themes. These less frequent categories were only mentioned by one or two participants, or were internally inconsistent, and so I set them aside and decided not to include them in the analysis of the research questions. For example, one participant discussed how UP contributed to developing citizenry. Although this was an interesting way to discuss the organization, no one else repeated this type of language. Therefore, it was impossible to justify this as a pattern. To bolster

the choice of what I considered to be patterns, I identified several illustrative stories and quotes from the data to support them.

Since case study research relies heavily on subjective data, I employed triangulation and disciplined analysis (Stake, 2008). In order to triangulate my field notes and interview data, I used member checks and worked with participants in order to corroborate my findings. I emailed all the participants I interviewed a copy of their interview transcript and asked if they wanted to discuss the interview data. Again, Giddens (1984) is highly critical of academics, and my participants were likewise critical of academics, so I wanted to work with them. I also had a meeting with the UP director to discuss the initial themes that emerged. The director agreed with my initial findings, adding that there could be more ways to describe UP and partnership. I agreed, and there were notably more participant ideas than patterns in my data, but my focus on structuration necessitated attention to the most repetitive and similar ways of talking.

Because I led the analysis of the data and the patterns, it is important to reflect on how my positionality could have affected the results. Since qualitative research is necessarily subjective and partial, this research also shows only a fraction of the whole picture of UP. To begin with, I encountered and worked with UP only through this study. I had not been a part of their organization before the research; therefore, I did not have personal experience to enhance the research. The UP director felt this was a benefit, because I was seeing the organization with a fresh perspective. However, structuration theory is interested in repeated structures, and the longer I worked with UP, the better my results could have been from personally witnessing more informal talking.

Because this is a critical case study, my positionality in regard to several critical factors including socioeconomic class, race, education, and language use are also important. The reason I highlight these factors is that they were of particular interest to the work of UP, and to UP participants. I am a 36-year-old White woman who was raised in a middle class household by White parents. We all spoke English when I was growing up, and my mother was a stay-at-home mom. My father graduated from a 4-year college, and my mother graduated from a 2-year college at the age of 65. These details about my life are important because they position me in contrast to many UP participants. UP focused on areas of my city where many ethnic populations lived, where many languages were spoken, and where many people faced barriers to higher education. I do not live in a UP community; I rent a house in a middle class neighborhood that is mostly White, where all my neighbors speak English. I have never faced a barrier to higher education such as UP community members face, and I have never faced any barriers speaking my native language. I have seldom heard others stereotype my childhood or current neighborhood in detrimental ways. In other words, in the case of UP, I was a privileged White woman who was part of the university system. I had not lived through many of the experiences of UP participants.

Since I have described myself as quite different from members of UP communities, it is important to reflect on why I wanted to involve myself with this organization and with engaged research. Before earning my master's degree, I worked for several years in nonprofit development, and have always been interested in community projects. I am fascinated by public process and the excitement of collaboration because I have always been a social person and a social learner. However,

I am compelled by critical accounts that problematize community development and argue that the concept of "helping" community members can be elitist and colonizing. I found UPartner to be appealing because they explicitly tried to work in collaborative ways and involve community members, and believe in reciprocal benefits of partnership. UP allowed me to position myself as a collaborator, a comfortable and more equitable role for me. The organization also inspired me and reminded me that I am a lifelong learner, and I benefit from the cultural knowledge of UP communities because is it creative and exciting.

The work of UP also excited me because I have taught on campus for four years to relatively homogenous populations of students. I would like to see more UP community members on campus because they would make classroom spaces more innovative spaces by bringing in cultural wealth and alternative viewpoints in classroom discussions. I believe access to education is a social justice issue, and access to education is an important way for U.S. citizens to improve their lives. I also believe that UP communities represent the future of the United States because of their diversity (Perlich, 2009), and it is important to understand and work together to address how education will transform and innovate to best serve the public needs. My position and experiences likely reinscribe a type of Western democratic ideal. Throughout the analysis, I grappled with my involvement and my beliefs, attempted to be transparent about any possible conflicts, and reflect on my journey in the concluding chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explained the case study approach of this research. I explored the interpretive roots of case study and then made a case for a critical interpretation.

Because of my interest and alignment with engaged communication research, I introduced the perspective of an "engaged advisor" with the intent to be a collaborator who could critique power imbalances and provide descriptive advice. Next, I introduced the case of UPartner (UP), and explained how I used three different methods to collect data: participant observation, interviewing, and textual analysis. I discussed how the data was analyzed and could have been affected by my positionality in the case. In the next three chapters, I offer responses to my guiding research questions. Chapters Four and Five address the first research question, and Chapter Six addresses the second question.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STRUCTURATION OF UPARTNER'S ACTIVITIES

In this research, I worked with UPartner (UP), an umbrella organization that seeks to facilitate and support the work of campus-community partnership. I want to stress that a significant activity for participants of this organization was "partnership." For example, when I asked participants how they describe the work of UP, they often referred to partnership, as in, "… it is a partnership and that is, that's a central element of what UP does." Because partnership was so central to the organization, I bracketed the discussion of partnership and address the structuration of partnership in Chapter Five. This chapter first explains how participants discussed the activities and work of the organization in general as reflected in the first research question of this study:

> RQ1(a): How do UP participants characterize the organization's activities?
> RQ1(b): What kinds of rules and resources do participants draw on, reproduce, and want to transform?

As I discussed in Chapter Three, it was important for UP staff to understand how participants were communicating about their work. The staff was interested in perceptions about its purpose and goals, and if participants communicated about the organization's activities in an accurate and/or unified way. Furthermore, a focus on activity offers insight into an important way that participants communicatively construct organization (R. D. McPhee & Zaug, 2001).

Understanding how participants structured the activities of UP was a critical first step in this analysis because this foundational descriptive knowledge could help the organization in their strategic planning. In other words, before planning where the organization wanted to go, they first needed to understand where they were. Organizational communication scholars argue that the way people communicate about their organizations and their work has a significant impact on their actions (Kirby & Krone, 2002). Structuration theory (Giddens, 1984) guided this analysis, and by understanding how participants structured the activities of UP, I analyzed how they were sustaining knowledge through their communication choices, and creating the basis for social action.

There are several levels to my analysis. The organization of UP had broad goals of creating change in public higher educational systems, and wanted to target what they considered to be "barriers to success." Structuration theory is often employed in organizational communication research regarding top-down planned organizational change (Jian, 2007; Kirby & Krone, 2002; Sherblom et al., 2002). By contrast, UP sought to create institutional change through involving its stakeholders in the work of partnership. However, before understanding where and how participants wanted to change, this chapter offers an important analysis of what structures were already in use and being reproduced.

The primary analytic tools that I employed were Giddens' (1984) central concepts of *structure*, *system*, and *the duality of structure.* First, I explain the main ways that participants structured the activities of UP (bracketing "partnership"). I show how a number of discursive patterns and practices coalesced through participant discourse to

structure the activities of UP. These discursive patterns and practices include the following: *Connection, Hopeland, Confusion,* and *Not Service/Outreach.* In my discussion of each, I describe rules for speaking as well as resources discussed by participants. A compelling argument of structuration theory is that organizational structures are simultaneously constraining and enabling (Giddens, 1984). I argue that the ways in which UP participants structured their activities simultaneously enabled and constrained their future actions. I also explain how structural properties of larger discourse systems such as the democracy and market discourse impacted the structuration of UP's activities.

Structuring the Activities of UPartner

Connection

The first discursive pattern was that participants spoke of UPartner (UP) as an organization that makes connections in several different ways. Participants repeated the importance of how UP helped to create system connections, such as between the [university to the community], the [community to the university], and also how UP helped to connect [participants to resources]. I first discuss the campus-community connections, and then discuss the resource connections. I highlight differences in resources throughout the discussion, as participants referenced resource differences between social systems of campus/university and community.

Connecting Campus/Community

Participants structured UP activities as a way to connect the systems of campus and community. This was accomplished in general terms such as participant's

explanations of "networking," "working together," and "making connections." One participant summarized: "It's always been about bringing the community and the university together." Several others described themselves as facilitators or connectors such as, "I can say I'm a community builder, I'm a community organizer, a facilitator of resources, a connector" and "UP is just connection. We only connect people." In these exchanges, the pattern was to describe UP as an organization that makes connections. Connections are typically necessary when two or more people or organizations are disconnected. Therefore, by repeatedly invoking the structure of connection, it was apparent that there were separations within or between systems that needed to be addressed.

In their discussions of connection, many participants mentioned the neighborhoods defined by UP's mission. These neighborhoods were a specific cluster of zip codes in one geographic area often referred to as the "west side." There were several examples that repeated the work of connection between the university and the west side. For example, one participant explained, "I would say that [UP] tries to bring the university to the west side community and tries to bring the west side community to the university." Another participant framed this connection as a "liaison" and "working together" when they said:

> I usually tell them we have, we work on the west side and we are a liaison with the community on the west side and the university. We try to get university faculty and staff and the residents and community organizations from the west side so they can work together.

In these characterizations, resources were not explicitly discussed. However, the stress on connection between the west side and the university invoked an existing separation that involved resource differences. These differences were geographical and also based

on enrollment data. The university was often referred to as on the east side of town, and several major roads and a railway bisected the two geographical areas of east and west. Furthermore, the west side was chosen as the area of focus for UP because its residents had the lowest enrollment in the university. Therefore, the discussion of connection invoked these geographical and enrollment separations between the two locales. These separations can be seen as differences between systems according to structuration theory, because they communicate about physical locales and also identity characteristics of members (Giddens, 1984).

Some participants stressed the benefit of connection to the university. For example, one participant said that the purpose of UP was, "Connecting to higher education. Anyone who wants to go to the university can come to UP and the staff can help you to look for scholarships, how to fill out applications, financially, that kind of stuff." Another participant noted, "We have other connections with the U that aren't through UP that are existing from this staff that rotates through here. But mostly, like 90% is dealt with UP. If I needed something, [the UP director] would be the first person I'd call." In these quotes, participants also started to make distinctions between the resources of both systems. Gaining resources was discussed as part of the "pathway to" higher education, because university enrollment had a cost, and part of UP's work included how to navigate scholarships and financial aid. When the participant noted that the UP director was the first person they would call if they needed something, the director (who was employed by UP through the university system) was recognized as having the ability to garner resources.

The discussion of "pathways to" higher education linked to UP's mission and history. The main page of their website read (as of 12/9/11): "[UPartner (UP)] links seven ethnically and culturally rich [city] neighborhoods with the [university] to create pathways to higher education." The following participant invoked the history of UP to explain such a characterization:

> I mean it's an investment in our community but it also gains enrollment for the U. But they wanted to get more diverse enrollment and so I say it creates a pathway to higher education for students on the west side you know, who have traditionally not been students that go all the way through college.

In this explanation, the participant used a financial analogy to liken UP's work to a university investment that was repaid through west side enrollment at the university. It also referenced a lack of diversity in the current university population by specifying the desire to gain "diverse enrollment." Here is another example of the "pathway to" metaphor:

> I'm so impressed with what UP does so I just, I always say it's such an incredible organization and there's, they've grown and they have a, an actual physical location on the west side and all these people - students - who are not likely candidates for college are going to college and getting scholarships and finding pathways to higher ed and they're starting at a really young age.

This example combined the "pathway to" metaphor with discussion of historical disconnection, and invoked resource differences. The participant discussed UP's link to scholarships to assist west side students in need of financial assistance to be able to take the "pathway to" the university. Again, this characterization showed how UP helped connect the university to the community need for resources to afford higher education.

In addition to the metaphors of pathways or "pathway to," a few participants characterized UP as a "connection between":

> And the core is the connection between the university and neighborhoods that have historically not been represented at the university or currently are not represented at the university. So, in their struggle to do important things that they're doing right, there's always a connection between the university and the neighborhoods which means it's an educational venture. And so that's kind of how I see it and I explain it to people.

In this quote, the participant again referenced a historical lack of representation, so the pattern of connection was again premised on a history of disconnection, or underrepresentation in terms of attendance at the university. Another way to communicate about a connection between was through the metaphor of a bridge as in:

> And that's where UP understands the meaning of education and higher education and making this bridge connected because the staff is in the middle and there's a connection that they're making on the west side and the east side where the university's located.

Above, the participant distinguished the two systems of university and campus by physical locale, but instead of a "pathway to," UP functioned as a bridge between the two systems. The staff of the organization was in the middle of the bridge, which constructed them as important to the connection. Here is another example of the use of the bridge metaphor in communicating about UP:

> We connect the community to the university to higher education to resources. It's all about connecting and I think in some way we're the bridge that connects, that connects organizations to the community, to the university. We're like that bridge that they have to go over just so that the partnership can begin. So that's how I see UP.

This quote combined the two main types of connection – connection between campus and community, and also connection to resources. Bridge metaphors do not invoke an end point as the "pathway to" metaphor does. In the above quote, resource differences were briefly mentioned. However, in the next section, I offer several more examples of how resources were discussed and featured in characterizations about UP.

Connecting to Resources: Social Services

As covered in the first section, a common way that participants structured the activities of UP was as "connection." This often took the form of connection between the university and the communities on the west side, which were targeted during the formation of the organization. Connections were characterized by pathways and bridges, and did not always mention resources of campus or community social systems. However, another common way to communicate about UP's work as connection was to feature how UP connected participants to resources such as social services and university and community resources. A brief example is, "People are looking for services and I send them to UP." In this section, I feature discussion about social services. Consider this participant's characterization of UP:

> It's open house to everybody no matter where you come from. You walk in and UP will not ask you anything. Who you are, where you from, what nationality you have, you know, what background. They just say, "How can I help you?" And the person says, "Yes. I need you know, a job." "I need help to see a doctor" or maybe "I have a degree in this country. My daughter needs to go nursing school." That kind of thing, and we just let them in.

This participant discussed the ability for UP to act as a connector to several different social service resources – career resources and health resources in addition to educational resources. Another participant offered a similar version of UP's work, and how it inspired them to help others. They discussed the mission of UP as connecting people with services that were connected to social work:

> I never thought that I'd be doing social work. I'm working with social workers. I have made a lot of connections with all different kinds of people and now if one of my community, a community person comes and asks me for something that I don't have, I know where to send them. I know where to refer them and we can go and we, I'm sure that it's going to help. So that is basically what, that is the mission right there to make sure that those things can happen in the community.

In this quote, the participant discussed about personal experiences with UP that were successful (they were "doing social work" and had made "connections with all different kinds of people"). As a result, this participant felt comfortable referring their friends to the organization, keeping connections "in the community." UP was acting as a connector between community members and community service organizations, in order to facilitate connections "in the community." In other words, UP acted as the connector, but it also facilitated community members in helping one another.

However, while several participants expressed how UP's connecting abilities were beneficial, several other participants offered caveats about the extent to which UP could connect to social service resources. For example, the following participant stressed that educational connection should come first:

> So what I see is they come and say, "Okay, can you help me this? Can you do this?" They don't assume UP cannot do everything. They're thinking UP is the tool for everything. If it comes to anything they need. [laughter] Not only coming to the [university]. Finding scholarships or, but everything else like employment, housing, you know, health access, all this kind of stuff. They think UP can do anything. That's one of the confusion that I can see people might have. UP cannot do everything. UP only can connect you to higher education.

This quote reaffirmed that people structure UP as a connector to services such as employment and health access. However, then the participant drew distinct boundaries between such services and higher education – "UP only can connect you to higher education." Another participant joked that some people thought UP helped pay rent. The organization did not pay people's rent, but did connect people with housing service programs that sometimes helped with one month's rent. These uneasy responses show that structuring UP as connection was conflicted when concerning social services, particularly finances.

Although UP's focus was not to provide social services, its organizational mission was to create systemic change in both community and university social systems. Therefore, the boundaries of UP's involvement were often difficult to comprehend. UP wanted to overcome systemic barriers to success beginning in early childhood education. One participant explained:

> We can't ignore the fact that people are unemployed, that people need access to housing, those are all complicated issues that lead to the question about higher ed, right? You can't look at the question of higher ed without looking at the whole system that's the route surrounding people.

This participant discussed unemployment and housing as connected to higher education. Most participants who discussed disparities between community and university systems likewise featured differences in resources. Here is another example that discussed resource differences:

> For the people that live in this community, there are other things that are before going to school. So for example in a family, they need to get, have good jobs before they can start thinking about sending their kids to college because those kids sometimes have to help out at home. So for some of those families, they have other needs that they need to meet before they can really start thinking about college or going to a university.

In this quote, the "things that are before going to school" involved resources such as good jobs and needs to meet at home.

However, although systemic issues were often critically framed as lack of material resources that prevented enrollment at the university, some participants also discussed comfort in the university system and literacy as resources, which both enhance the chances for self-expression and self-development:

> And that ultimately it's a program to try to serve the broader community better and get west side people up to the university, make them understand that it's their place too and they belong here. But you can't start with like high school seniors

> to do that. You have to really look at broadly, health care and little kids reading books and there's, it just takes a broad sweep to kind of make that kind of change.

The participant discussed that west side students needed to see the university differently: "…it's their place too and they belong here." By implying that west side students might not feel that the university is their place, the participant drew distinctions between the two social systems of community and university, and who had comfort within those systems to develop and express themselves. However, access to literacy in this case study was complex because there was a great deal of cultural and linguistic diversity in the community. Children in UP communities were likely working on literacy in multiple languages. As I will further explain in Chapter Five, this resource of knowing multiple linguistic and social codes may not have been understood by a university system dominated by White English speaking students.

Connecting to Resources: University Resources

While many described UP's activity as providing connections to social services, another important pattern was that participants discussed UP connecting them to university resources. These resources took several different forms, but were generally material in nature, such as scholarships, faculty research, funding for graduate students, and seed funding. UP had several scholarship funds, and it also offered financial resources to faculty members to start partnerships. This participant discussed connection as the way that UP supported new partnerships:

> But after you start the partnership with these individuals or those that are interested, you do a lot, UP does a lot of the connecting, the guidance, you begin to guide and provide information and resources or even the idea of a model that could probably begin to set off this idea that's coming about. And usually the first year is just learning and observing and sharing and the following year it moves more into action. But the whole time, UP is right there providing

support.

In this quote, the participant described the formation of partnerships, and how during this beginning phase, UP provided support through connecting and also offering guidance, information, resources, or "even the idea of a model." Another participant discussed how UP connected them with initial resources for partnership work: "As a faculty member, I had no other place to go to unless I wanted to pay for that out of pocket. The university didn't have an office right, to provide that kind of service with that kind of support." They went on to explain that they considered UP's funding as an investment by the university, invoking market discourse:

> It reaffirmed for [the partnership] the idea that the university had an investment in what we were proposing. Even though that university investment, you know has manifested through UP. We knew it was limited and we knew it was tenuous at the time. We didn't know how long UP would be able to support us.

The market metaphor of investment used here implied a return. Furthermore, the partnership did not know how long the resources would last, leaving them in a vulnerable position. In the situation, UP had the power to garner crucial university resources as part of its connecting abilities.

A significant resource that UP drew upon in its connecting activities was its relationship with the Office of the President. As I discussed in Chapter Three, UP was its own academic unit (the only one directly reporting to the Office of the President) and a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, a United States government tax status designation. In structuring the organization's activities, several stressed this connection to the president, and specifically the Office of the President as in, "We are under the president's office" or "We are a department under the President's Office of the University." One participant praised the Office of the President saying, "The president's office has been a great

support and I just feel like they've been with us all the way." The Office of the President was at the top of the university organizational chart. Therefore, it provided symbolic weight to UP, and signified the top of the university organizational chart. This association offered credibility to the organization's activities.

Although many mentioned the resource of connection to the Office of the President, a few participants noted that it was not well known that UP was under the Office of the President. However, participants wanted to strengthen this resource connection and discuss this resource strategically. For example, one participant said, "I would say the university is probably the last to understand what we do, which is so funny because we're part of – we're in offices of the university. [laughter] You know, we're part of the Office of the President." Another participant told the following story about interactions they have had with people from the university about UP:

> So it's people who are in the system and then they're going, "Well where's this money coming from? Is this a university entity?" It's like, "Yes," you know? Like it goes president of the university, [the UP director]. There's nobody in between. [The director is] directly under him and they're like, and then some people won't believe me. And I go, "No, seriously."

This quote showed that some people at the university were skeptical about UP's relationship with the Office of the President. Since the office was at the very top of the organizational chart for the university, it was a prestigious placement, denoting importance.

Several participants discussed how this resource offered credibility to their work. A general comment was that, "I think it's been absolutely critical that the president's office, both current president and prior one are so supportive of the whole idea. And that makes a big difference." While the big difference in this quote was not discussed in

terms of resources, several specific benefits of being linked with the president were also discussed. For example, one participant highlighted the link between the UP director and the president:

> That's the direct access that [the UP director] has with the president. And so her representation of what's happening, and what the community asks, is asking for, is heard directly by the individual who is responsible for the university as a partnership. We have a whole department you know? Us. [laughter].

In this quote, the director's access to the president was seen as a benefit because the director was able to have conversations one on one with the president about community interests and requests. The UP director therefore had direct access to the strongest authority figure of the university system, and they both had power to arrange people in space and time and allow for chances of self-expression and self-development. One participant noted:

> [The UP director] reports directly to the president and these are all symbolic things but if you're in an organization that large and you see all of these sort of symbolic gestures, yeah, do all the people at [the university] know what UP does and embrace it or even care? Probably not. It's a big place but is it an example of an effort that is trying to do more than be big brother and come down and just deliver services? Yes, and I think that by positioning it so close to the president then [the UP director] can educate that person and…yeah, so I definitely think that the University is committed.

The participant explained that the director's placement augmented their influence. By showing that UP was important to the university, it functioned to combat a lingering image of the university as a "big brother" who was there to "just deliver services." As I will explain later in this chapter, the discursive pattern of "not service" was important to participants.

Finally, one employee told me that they strategically employed the resource of the President's Office in order to gain credibility and assist them in their job. In their

explanation, they juxtaposed the two systems of community and campus in their discussion of the reality of being off-campus (because UP is physically located in a house on the west side) yet also being a part of the president's office:

> Participant: If I need them to send me something, like in the mail, I say, if I say, "Let me give you my address because we're off campus," you can tell that they treat you differently. But if I say, "I'm calling from the President's Office, can you send me this?" And they can also send us mail in the President's Office.
> Me: I saw the mailbox there.
> Participant: Yeah. So they are a lot more willing to, they treat us better. They treat me better if I say that.
> Me: Wow.
> Participant: Yeah, if some people don't know like even on campus, they're like, "You're from where? University what?" So I have to explain. So usually we just say, "I'm calling from the President's Office."

The participant went on to note the importance of using this credibility to work toward partnerships with community organizations, including local public schools:

> I say, "Hey you know we are part of the U and not only that, we're a part of the President's Office" because I think unfortunately that opens a lot of doors. You know I just, for example, in schools, if we just say, "Oh we're coming to your organization." Sometimes they're like, "Uh, well let me think about it." Right? But if we say, "We're from the President's Office at the [university] and this is what we do," like we focus on the west side, they're a lot more willing to work with us or at least that's what I find.

Here again, leveraging the Office of the President was important in building credibility and gaining access to local schools and organizations, and this leverage was understood and used by those working with UP. Another participant also told me they benefit from being associated with a powerful organization like UP because grant agencies took their community programs more seriously. Connection to the university, especially its highest office, offered "trickle down" resource opportunities for community organizations to access greater possibilities through the university itself, grants, and private donations. In

these ways, UP was described as a powerful organization that could facilitate connections both in the university system and in the community.

Finally, one participant also pointed out that UP has fundraised and received private funds, another connecting ability. By bringing in private funds, UP attracted resources from outside the university system to benefit partnerships. The participant said, "I think that the leadership at UP has done an incredible job in raising private funds. More so I think than anybody would have ever expected... That's a tremendous accomplishment on their part, which speaks to their effectiveness." Several UP partnerships have grown large, become well known, and have been able to raise private funds, in part because of the credibility they had as part of the organization. Working with UP made partnerships attractive to donors. As one said, "…the university's also supporting this kind of work. So all, you know, additional private entities saw that, saw this as a real collaborative." In other words, if the university is willing to donate, private donors will see this as a form of strength and donate too.

Connecting to Resources: Community Resources

Finally, when following the rule of describing connections, a few participants noted that the work of UP was to connect university participants with people of color in the community, or to provide a connection to diversity. This implied that university participants were not typically people of color, and were not typically diverse. For example, one participant said:

> Academics do a lot of studying of, of um, of class difference or race differences and stuff like that but, don't spend a whole lot of time meeting people of different class and race. So that is part of the, part of the mission of UP, offering the professors at the Ivory Tower to meet some friendly faces.

This quote characterized academics as distanced from issues of class and race, because they were in the "Ivory Tower." The implication was that university members were a homogenous class and race that was unaccustomed to diversity. The academics depicted in the participant's quote would see UP as a way to meet diverse populations. Another participant was also concerned that UP might be seen as a superficial way to connect to diverse populations. They explained:

> Whenever we're talking about the need to diversify, people go to UP. And that's important right, because there are diverse communities at UP, but what happens is they stop there. So UP doesn't actually stand for all of the places where we would need to do recruitment, outreach, building relationships. But what happens is "Oh, well go to UP. So you need to get more students of color in your program? Go to UP. Oh you need to find some Latinas to talk about something? Oh, go to UP."

Both of these participants characterized this connection to diversity humorously. The first participant set up professors from an ivory tower against some friendly community faces (of diversity). The second participant set up university personnel as looking for quick connections to diversity, such as a Latina who could "talk about something." This second participant stressed that there was a "racialized component to UP," an issue I will revisit in the next chapter. In these quotes, UP was discussed as a way to connect to diverse communities, and the humor used depicted university members as lacking in understanding.

Enabling and Constraining Features of Connection

As participants drew upon the structure of *Connection*, it revealed several enabling qualities of this discursive pattern and practice. By connecting, UP has made significant progress in opening and extending the spaces and places of university involvement in local communities. Although ivory tower metaphors continue to circulate,

UP participants were beginning to speak more about pathways and bridges. The "pathway to" pattern can be problematic, because it is not always clear that the path travels both ways. But, pathways are reinforcing a belief that community members can travel to the university, and the bridge metaphors show that the path goes both ways. The fact that many participants speak of UP as a bridge shows the strength of its work to create a support function. Connecting also implies the ability to get past some historical inequities and work together. Therefore, the structure of *Connection* can enhance the organization's goals of earning more support for resources, teaching, and research.

Furthermore, the structure of *The Office of the President* is enabling to UP's goals of increasing funding and advocacy because of its symbolic weight in both systems of university and community. As participants discussed, the repetition of this structure enabled them to gain credibility and allow for more chances for self-expression. UP benefitted from a symbolic leadership position at the top of the organizational chart in the Office of the President. Having this placement also meant that the UP director reported directly with the president, allowing for valuable one on one conversations between the two. The placement also adds to the organization's appeal for funding both within and outside the university. As several participants noted, funding organizations were impressed by the president's support, and were more willing to donate to an organization that the president so strongly vouched for.

However, structural patterns are always both enabling and constraining. The pattern of connection could draw attention to and reproduce an idea of disconnections – or physical limits of the past. This pattern, in its repetition, could become a habit for participants and serve to reproduce differences. Community members could also use

disconnection as a negative sanction against the university. As I will discuss later in this research, it was important for participants to see communities as integrated in universities, and connection implies a separation. The unintended consequence of this characterization of the organization's work could be antagonism as opposed to integration.

Hopeland

A second way that participants structured the activities of UP was by discussing the Hopeland Center, one of its most successful partnerships started in 2004. Hopeland was the name of an apartment complex that was home to many incoming and refugee populations. Before the year 2011, the Hopeland partnership location was confined to two small apartments in the complex. When I visited these apartments, they were full of children working on a cultural performance and on computers, and it was difficult to walk from room to room because of the congestion. Also, adults were milling around outside waiting for classes held in the other apartment about literacy, citizenship, and many other topics. In order to expand the partnership, UP purchased an adjacent building and was in the midst of a capital campaign. I attended the kickoff fundraising event in Fall of 2010, a televised event that attracted a large audience of UP participants.

Hopeland was very popular and attracted a large number of community members, faculty, and students. It also attracted local press coverage, which featured Hopeland as a significant part of UP's work. When I started this research, I was very impressed by Hopeland. An article published in the alumni magazine of the university even referred to UP as "UP/Hopeland," focusing on the work of Hopeland throughout the piece. Hopeland was frequently cited as a good example of partnership, because it was

connecting residents to services and the university, and the residents were active in the partnership. For example, Hopeland had its own resident committee and steering committee made up of key community members and opinion leaders. In the Spring 2011 semester, a Hopeland resident team-taught a university class on immigration and resettlement. Participants often discussed Hopeland when asked about UP's work as in, "I think people identify some of the projects that are going on, like Hopeland." The partnership was often discussed as a very successful one as in, "There are branches like at Hopeland that are thriving and the residents are definitely a big part of it." Another participant told me that university members often don't know about UP and "Only those who know UP are the ones who come and do some service in the Hopeland Apartment."

The partnership developed at Hopeland was often described as a partnership involving the College of Social Work, which was also the home discipline of UP's director and assistant director. In this way, the close affiliation with an academic discipline was seen as a resource. One participant noted, "The College of Social Work has been really supportive. The Hopeland Center wouldn't exist without Social Work students. They're the core, the reason the door's open is because they're in there." Another participant stressed the Social Work connection and also the College of Education when they said:

> [The UP director] comes from the Social Work arena so there are a lot of Social Work people who are involved. Particularly in Hopeland and that kind of - and then um, some of the other people are involved and they're involved in the education realm. So that's - we've gotten the thing going. I don't know that there's anyone on the board or any leadership forum that's from other departments. I don't know. Maybe there are, I just haven't had that experience.

In this quote, the participant described UP work as mostly Social Work and Education, not understanding the extent to which the organization was involved in other disciplines.

Although many participants were supportive of the work happening at Hopeland, I heard several others express confusion about how Hopeland factored into the activities of UP. Sometimes Hopeland was described as the main focus of UP such as, "Some think, like especially about Hopeland and something, we just work for people with refugee status or immigrants. Some people think that we just work with those people." Others were confused about what was happening at Hopeland, confusing it with a service agency. An example is:

> Then I learned about Hopeland and all the things that they were doing to get you know, bring refugees up to you know, be able to go to college and put partnerships together to provide some services to that refugee community. It wasn't really until this year that I learned that they were trying to put academics into the community as well. There was a two-way street that was happening there.

In this quote, the participant discussed being unsure about the Hopeland partnership arrangement. They noted that their first impression was that what was taking place at Hopeland was only service delivery, however, the participant eventually learned that "There was a two-way street that was happening there." Although this participant voiced confusion about what was happening at Hopeland, they did eventually understand the arrangement and how it was considered partnership. The confusion was notable because another pattern of UP participants (that I discuss later in this chapter) was that they did not want the organization characterized as service. This participant also expressed confusion at Hopeland's place in the work of UP:

> I think that several people have talked about Hopeland having a pretty big focus and that focus being like a focus that maybe should, the focus should be more deep than getting sort of really entrenched in like the refugee programs. I've heard like, "What's the connection between Hopeland and higher education?" And so that's come up a couple times.

Yet another participant expressed a similar story:

> I think the campus is sort of scratching its head saying, "Okay, so they purchased a house, a new house for the Hopeland residents, which is terrific. Now how does that fit into broadening greater access to higher education from west side community members?" Do you follow?

These two participants voiced concern that the work happening at Hopeland was going to connect to higher education or broaden access to the university and higher education. The above quote alluded to some tension about UP favoring Hopeland with material resources in the form of a new building.

Several other participants expressed tension about Hopeland because they perceived that Hopeland linked incoming populations to resources as opposed to populations with historical roots in the community (such as Latina/o populations). The capital campaign for Hopeland was to support a new center to offer residents greater access to partnership programs. These programs (such as literacy, citizenship education, and cultural education) were cocreated to enhance the resources of residents. With the new center, Hopeland participants would continue to enhance their self-development and self-expression. Faculty and students created stable research relationships there. This perceived concentration of resources caused tension. For example, one participant criticized, "I'll be frank. I think Hopeland's an albatross. I don't - they're putting a ton of resources into it and it's only one little part of the community." Two other participants similarly expressed frustration at the perception that UP was allocating more resources to incoming and refugee populations than populations with historical roots in the community, particularly Latino/a populations. However, although participants were often confused about Hopeland, they also expressed confusion about the organization in general, as I will discuss later in this chapter.

Enabling and Constraining Features of Hopeland

The discursive pattern of *Hopeland* enables the work of UP in several ways. The repetition of Hopeland's success and uniquity served to draw attention to the organization in general. Hopeland attracted a significant amount of press, which promoted UP. Furthermore, because Hopeland was so strongly tied to Social Work and Education, it served as an important type of work that could be leveraged in those disciplines to create change. For example, the Colleges of Education and Social Work were changing conceptions of retention, tenure, and promotion as this research occurred, and were exciting spaces of innovation. These innovations were in part inspired by work at Hopeland.

However, *Hopeland* is also constraining to many of UP's goals because the organization was often conflated with one partnership, which obfuscates the complex web of other partnerships in UP's work. In other words, while Hopeland has been a successful partnership, it runs the risk of overshadowing other efforts. This could create a situation where the UP context is structurally constrained by a focus on Hopeland to where it is difficult for participants to see other partnership choices when working with UP. Participants expressed concern about this possibility, which could simply be temporary, and exacerbated as a result of the capital campaign. However, the lingering resentment among participants over the resources allocated to that particular partnership could prove constraining because of negative sanctioning. This resentment could be seen as foreshadowing what would happen in the case of a potential tertiary contradiction, or in other words what would happen if UP changed the goal of its work from many partnerships to Hopeland only. While the partnership was a great example of community

based research and teaching, it was not the only example, and therefore a big focus on Hopeland may be constraining. If future participants think UP is only Hopeland, it could hinder the organization's ability to generate more resources. On the other hand, the greater picture of UP as a multitude of partnerships would reduce such perceived structural constraints.

Confusion

Throughout the data, in terms of the activities of UP, a third discursive pattern was that confusion was repeatedly discussed. Participants often discussed people "getting" or "not getting" UP. While some participants thought that community members had a hard time understanding the work of UP, the overwhelming pattern was that participants discussed how people in the university system didn't "get it." University participants even critiqued their own colleagues and coworkers, often employing humor and sarcasm to highlight university confusion.

First, a few participants discussed confusion in general, as in, "I've met people who have no clue what UP is. They don't even know we are part of the university or it's like, "Oh, I've heard of UP but I'm not quite sure what they do." A poll on the organization's Facebook (social networking) website on December 8, 2011 read: "UPartner asked: Is there an issue which you think UP should be working on?" The three possible answers to this poll were "1. I don't even know what UP is!, 2. No, UP is doing an amazing job! and 3. (Add an answer)." The poll's first answer showed that the organization was concerned about its impact. As one participant said, "Some don't know us. Some don't even know that we exist. And some really, really do know us." In this

quote, the participant made a dramatic distinction between those who know UP and those who don't. Here is another example of this dramatic distinction made:

> I don't hear any talk about UP outside of our circle of - the UP community. The insiders, the board members, the staff and the you know, some other people that have a meaningful relationship, it's either a meaningful relationship or they've never heard of us before.

This echoes the pattern that comes up in the Facebook poll: unknown vs. amazing.

Even those identified as important participants of UP and staff of UP often expressed difficulty explaining the organization's work. Several people laughed and wanted to look at the organization's annual report to be accurate. Others were afraid they didn't exactly know. For example, this participant mentioned knowing the organization for a long time and still not understanding them:

> Participant: I will say that I still don't think that I totally get it. I mean… I've known them for six years. I've known of them for six years and every year I learn something that's pretty much makes it a totally different organization than the year before in my mind.
> Me: Really?
> Participant: But I, I mean, I don't know. I kind of tried to allude to that earlier but and I still, I still don't know if what they're doing is charitable or if it's to achieve some meaningful business outcome for the [university], and I like the latter better than the former.

In the above exchange, the participant followed the pattern of not getting UP: "I still don't think that I totally get it." Then, they went on to express confusion at whether or not UP was charitable or creating a "meaningful business outcome," and finally (as was another common rule among UP participants) expressed disdain for charity.

Many participants explained that the reason why people did not "get it" was the complexity of the work. I heard participants discussing this issue several times, and the staff in particular was eager to create a short description of UP because, as one participant told me, "I try to explain everything in a really short amount of time but it's really hard to

do that… I need like twenty minutes to explain what we do." At the end of one interview, a participant wanted to make sure that I personally was "getting it." They were very encouraging to me and said:

> I will say be patient. The more you stay with UP, the more you ask, the more information you get because there's a lot of information out there. There's a big need out there. So you don't – I mean you ask most of the things we do. I hope you get enough information about what UP looks like.

In this way, I could tell they were still concerned that I understood the organization even after an hour long interview. Another participant sighed while talking to me, and said, "It would be cool to go into a space where people knew who we were… and more sincerely."

A few participants mentioned community or constituent group's confusion over UP. One participant told me about community confusion over UP's office location:

> A lot of people don't know who we are and what we do. They see the office and they also think that we're a house and that we're really big fans of the U. I got that a couple of times too. I say, "You know our office it's located here in the community. We're next to [a park], in the house." And they're like, "Oh the one with the flag?" And I'm like, "Yeah." "I always thought they were…" and I'm like, "Yeah. No, that's our office."

Here, another participant discussed community confusion over UP, and reconciling that confusion by associating UP with social justice circles, or with certain partnerships like Hopeland:

> Funny thing. It's only certain people that talk about it. Like in my family, who all lives on the west side, has been there for generations, doesn't know anything about UP. But it's people like when I come up here to the [university] campus, it's people in the social justice circles, they know UP. Most people that I, if I hear anything, it is talk about UP as [*names a specific College of Education partnership*]. And then I always see on the news, Hopeland Apartment Complex.

Finally, some participants discussed different constituent groups that didn't understand, such as the board of advisors. For example:

> I think the board of advisors just doesn't, they don't get it. You know, you can't get it unless you do it, right? And part of [UP] is to create opportunities for people to do it. To have the space and time and resources to actually do something… And that does our organization a huge disservice if we have board of advisors who don't get it.

However, although some participants discussed community and board confusion about the organization, the large majority of participants discussed how people in the university system didn't "get it."

Communication about the university not "getting" UP was very common even among participants who were university employees describing other university employees. For example, "Even people at the university sometimes don't know. They know of it, but they don't know really what it is." Another participant expressed difficulty in trying to create new partnerships at the university when they said, "I mean we have departments that know us, you know, but when I call up a department that I usually, that we usually don't work with, they're like, "What? Who?"" Participants sometimes took on a frustrated or critical tone when discussing university confusion. Several participants expressed sarcastic or judgmental opinions of people in the university system that did not get it. Here is one description:

> I'm a little bit surprised, I mean the university is a big place and there's a lot going on, so there's a lot that I don't know about the university I'm sure. But I'm a little bit surprised how often I'll be talking to people who are university people who have never heard of it. So they're going, "UP? Hmm." And then they'll say, "That's a university…" and I'll say, "Yeah, UPartner" and they'll go, "Well is that connected to the university?" It's like, "Yeah, it's called the UPartner."

In this quote, the university "people" who don't get it were characterized as surprised and slow to comprehend. Several participants called attention to faculty in particular, saying that it was rare that faculty fully understood the organization's work: "Sometimes we'll work with a faculty member and it's just like you just get it. You know, I'll listen to

them explain what we do and it is very similar to how we might say it… but that's rare."

One participant mentioned conversations with faculty who were surprised when they did find out what UP was doing:

> So in some respects, I think for some people, UP sort of allowed them to wash their hands and say, "Okay well we have UP there so we don't have to do anything else on the west side" without a full understanding of what UP does. I know there are conversations that I'll have with faculty sometimes about community engaged scholarship and I'll tell them about opportunities through UP and they'll look at me and say, "I didn't realize these were opportunities that UP was creating. I always thought UP was just a sort of public relations you know, office on the west side, with a little building."

In the above quote, the participant explained a misunderstanding among faculty members about UP as public relations on the west side, not community engaged scholarship. Another participant described difficulty making a scholarly argument for her research with her supervisor by saying, "Maybe if I sat down and talked to him, he would go, "Oh okay, I get it." But his first response is, "Well, then she's not doing that stuff anymore if she's going to be doing real research." This quote again depicted a university faculty member not getting UP, and even looking at it as not "real research."

Several participants were even more incredulous at university confusion: they sighed or rolled their eyes or made expressions of "Can you believe this?" as they were talking. One participant said:

> I actually hate it… teaching people at the university what we do because, I don't know. [A friend] said it perfectly once, they were like, "These are people who have degrees. Really?" And there was a question and I was like, "Yeah. They do. That's why you need to get your degree."

In this quote, the participant mentioned that people at the university have degrees and expecting more from people who possess such accreditation. This difference in education was implied in other exchanges, as if having a doctoral degree necessitated

much more understanding. One participant made a joke about university members not knowing UP's location: "They've never been over there but they know there's something over there. It could be a doghouse or you know it could be a three story building. They don't know what's out there." Another participant told me a story about a meeting where a few faculty members in a department expressed stereotypes about west side students. The participant remembered, "I don't think they're getting it… And [the faculty members] got reprimanded by [the dean of the department] right in front of the whole, this whole room full of people because they were completely out of line." In the story, the faculty members were confused, insulting, "out of line," didn't get it, and had to be reprimanded. The repetition of university confusion points to an important aspect of UP's work, and a systemic barrier that they are focused on changing.

Some UP participants were worried about what might happen to UP if a new presidential hire didn't understand the organization's value. One participant feared that UP could be stopped entirely: "That's a real concern of mine that you know, someone who doesn't get it and understand it you know, and know what's important about it, it would be politically unwise to do it but, someone could do it." These quotes show an escalating concern for people in higher levels of the university system hierarchy not "getting it."

Enabling and Constraining Features of Confusion

The structuring of UP's work as confusion can be seen as simultaneously enabling and constraining. There are several aspects of confusion that could work in UP's interest. For example, confusion could be a way to create strategic ambiguity (Eisenberg, 1984), which would give the organization room to innovate and change without being tied to

formal understandings of their work. In addition, confusion could be an important way that participants seek information and then become more informed about the organization. Participant admission of a lack of knowledge about partnership could stimulate knowledge building (H. E. Canary & McPhee, 2009).

However, confusion can be constraining because in order for the organization to lobby for further resources and to self-promote, it needs to have a clear vision and purpose. The repetition of confusing stories and characterizations about the organization was troubling to many staff members. The staff generally thought that confusion was constraining their goals, and was trying to work to create a clear vision for members. Confusion led to negative sanctioning among participants, as in the disdain for those who don't "get" what is happening. The organization was trying to work on this, and several board meetings focused on writing a short vision statement, and a recent ambassadors program has started to alleviate confusion. In the next section, I will explain how one key to "getting" UP is to understand that it is not service or outreach.

Not Service/Outreach

The final way that participants structured the activities was UP was in an inverse relationship to service and outreach. These characterizations functioned to structure the organization's activities as *not* another activity. I combined service and outreach in this section because there is a strong commonality among these two types of work, and a common character to the way participants discussed them. In this discursive pattern, participants often explicitly acknowledged a power differential between the two systems of the university and the community. In service, the university "helps" communities. In outreach, the university "reaches out" to communities. In these types of work, the

university is the explicit source of resources, and the community is seen as lacking resources. Helping or reaching out to the community in these ways has been traditionally seen as beneficial to enhance the university's reputation. As I have previously noted, critical scholars have criticized such activities as service learning as suspect in motivations and outcomes (Eisenberg, 1984).

Many participants made the distinction between UP and service or service-learning. Among most participants, it was a grave mistake to characterize the organization as a service organization. One participant said, "I anticipate and can envision and hope for a more thorough understanding of what we do." This error was discussed as perpetuated by those who do not fully understand UP's purpose, such as reporters: "I think the press portrays us as a service organization in the neighborhoods. That we're here serving the community." UP participants were very careful about the distinction, one said "I've been schooled, but I knew it even before, it's not a service agency. It does not provide services. It tries to work in collaboration with communities to um address needs and particularly needs that focus around education." In this quote, the participant discussed having been sanctioned for talking about the organization as service. Giddens (1984) argues that the strongest structures are those that are met with sanctions. This sanctioning between members points to how important it was for UP to *not* be characterized as service. Another example was:

> People think that we do like service learning or community service but what we do is like partnership work because we're not here to do service to the community right? We're here to like work with them and create those relationships between the U and the community.

In this quote, service was again criticized; it was described as something that was done "to the community" instead of "between the U and the community."

In terms of resources between systems, "service" implies that the university system was offering its resources with nothing in return. This could be material resources such as scholarships or research funding, as well as university faculty teaching community members without the community reciprocating. Because UP's work was predicated upon traditions such as community engaged scholarship and participatory research, the organization did not want to be characterized as service. They believed that community participants had a wealth of assets to offer in return for university assets. However, this pattern of campus/community relationship has already been structured in the university system through the work of other initiatives like service learning, which has gained momentum on United States campuses since the 1960s.

Service learning was also offered at the same university, creating a challenge in making distinctions. The next participant mentioned the university's service learning center to draw distinctions about UP's work:

> But like you know, everything from faculty think we do service learning. Faculty think or people at the university think we're like a referral center so we're out here in the community you know working with brown people to like, you know, like Kumbaya diversity or some crap like that right? [laughter] Like it's, you get all the above. I think that's also frustrating because, with some faculty, there's the whole issue of community engaged scholarship that's devalued in the academy. So then we have to deal with that, we have to let people know that we're not really - we're not the [service learning center] right? We're not here to do service learning, that's the [service learning center's] job.

In this quote, the participant took aim at university faculty. Again, faculty members were characterized as confused and frustrating. They were also characterized as taking a shallow view of UP's work as "Kumbaya diversity or some crap like that." Other participants also cited faculty confusion in particular, such as "I think many individual faculty initially saw it as service, that this is a great place to provide service. And truly,

that's a misconception." Here is another example where the participant criticized faculty for confusing UP with service learning:

> I also think faculty don't get involved because of misconceptions. You know, they think we're service learning, they think we're this or that or that. It doesn't really matter. Um, they don't have a sense of the story of who we are, so therefore they use their misconceptions, their lack of knowledge to continually distance themselves.

This quote again revealed cynicism about faculty members. Here they were framed as confused and wanting "to continually distance themselves." Creating distance can be seen as a way to maintain power in terms of structuration, and an ability to control space and time arrangements. The above quote implied that if a faculty member invoked confusion, they could avoid working in the spaces of the community system, and privilege the spaces of the university. In other words, the ability to "distance themselves" involved the choice of the agent to stay away from certain spaces and places.

In order to make sense of why service comes up so often in the work of UP, one participant made comparisons with the way the majority of nonprofits approach the west side community:

> And so even after I tell people stories and more concretely what that looks like on the ground, people tend to gravitate toward more the, "Oh, you're trying to help people. Oh, you're trying to you know like, the nonprofit mission of trying to aid a family, right?" And I think that that's something that UP's trying to change the way that people think about our work and the way that people do work in communities, but the same time, we have a whole system of nonprofits that that is what they do. And so it's hard to kind of perpetuate, it's hard to combat that perpetuation of that philosophy because we're very much in the minority in terms of organizations that are a nonprofit that do work with families but don't do it in that way you know?

Therefore, while UP had to combat historically repeated university structures of service learning, it also faced historically repeated community structures of service as well. In both systems of university and community, talking about service was common, and UP's

partnership approach was in the minority in terms of university and community work. The participants' determination showed the strength and repetition of historical service structures, and how they created frustration.

UP participants also struggled with the characterization of the organization as outreach. But, a few participants that I interviewed did use the term outreach. The first example is:

> Well it's a connection with the [university] with the community. And it's an outreach organization to help the community remember and understand there's a university right here in the midst of it all. And then it, it has a focus of trying to help the poor and underrepresented um, with educational issues and welfare issues as part of the outreach work that the university itself does.

In this quote, the structure of connection was repeated along with the mention of outreach. This participant qualified the outreach by tying it to a change in university accreditation: "Part of the accreditation process changed with the expectation that universities did more outreach within the communities where they were placed." Therefore, this participant saw UP as responding to a university mandate for outreach. In the quote, by describing about how the community needs help to remember "there's a university right here," the participant again referenced an existing separation. In the second example of using outreach to describe the organization, the participant acknowledged that they say outreach even though they know that UP would not like it:

> I would say, and I do say… that we are the university's west side outreach program. [laughter] But, I know that like that is a particular like [the UP director] I don't think wants to be perceived as doing outreach. I think [the director] has very specific ideas about why we're not outreach from the perspective as somebody who knows a tremendous amount about Social Work. I think that for [the director], something like outreach is very disempowering because I would guess that it associates it with somebody who has knowledge and of like giving a hand up or hand out to somebody who doesn't have knowledge or power or whatever. But, what I find is that it's very, that is how ad hoc community representatives, that's how they're able to conceptualize the kind of work that we

> do. So they consider it outreach. So if I want to really be able to explain what we do, I say outreach because that's the model that people are able to conceptualize. If I say community engaged scholarship or participatory action research, people are like, "What is that?" [laughter] So yeah. So I typically, if I only have a second, I say… "It was created by the president's office in 2001 because a demographic analysis made the U realize there was a tremendous disparity between east side and west side access to the U basically. So we're kind of the U's west side outreach program." If I have more time, I would try and do something different but, it's just like you said, with a friend to explain it, that's what I say. [laughter] Outreach. A dirty word."

This characterization of the organization again pointed to the issue of complexity, of certain terms that people don't "get" (community engaged scholarship, participatory action research), and of the need to simplify the organization's purpose into something short to discuss with any type of stakeholder. This participant thought that, although outreach was "a dirty word," that it served its purpose of succinct explanation, and drew upon familiar historical structures that people could understand.

Although these two participants mentioned "outreach," in general, UP did not want to be considered as such. In a feature about the organization in the alumni magazine, one heading read, in capital letters, "PARTNERING, NOT OUTREACH (Lindberg, 2010)." Several other participants set up the organization in contrast to outreach, as in:

> It's not outreach. And it's really about okay then, how do residents and students and families here in the west side, how then do they have an active role? And in a role that's important enough that without their participation, a partnership wouldn't be successful.

In outreach, power relationships are not targeted for transformation, and the university does not desire to change its systems. It is another form of service with the university cast as benefactor of the most desirable resources. The repetition of discursive patterns against outreach shows another one of UP's fundamental struggles when engaging in

activities.

Enabling and Constraining Features of Not Service/Outreach

Finally, the structure of *Not Service/Outreach* could be enabling to the organization's work because it created uniquity and allowed the organization to escape the sociohistorical problematics of service learning. Describing the organization's work as partnership, as I will detail in the next chapter, afforded more opportunities for egalitarian organizing. Furthermore, by positioning the organization's work as opposed to outreach, UP was able to achieve legitimacy in social justice circles at the university and gain credibility with community members.

However, this pattern is also constraining to UP's goals because the repetition of "we are *not* service" and "we are *not* outreach" draws attention from what UP *is.* In other words, this pattern of negative identification ("We are not X") still repeats and thus reinscribes the structures of service and outreach as more normalized and powerful than those, for example, of partnership and community based research. By contrast, an affirmative identification ("We are partnership") serves to create a new structure and reinscribe a new ideal as UP works toward self-promotion and advocacy. It also avoids the need to negatively sanction those who make mistakes. Furthermore, although UP may not be service or outreach, the organization works closely with service learning initiatives and university and community members who may be involved in those activities in addition to their involvement with UP. Negative sanctioning of service or outreach constrains possibilities for collaboration. Both UP and the service learning center need to coexist together in the university setting – a type of primary contradiction where both organizations depend on the university for funding, despite espousing conflict

goals. Canary (2010b) writes that primary contradictions exist because of system features, and represent oppositional tensions in a system. These contradictions do not require system transformation in order to be managed – they may be everyday tensions, such as when students in universities generate revenue and also entail costs (H. E. Canary, 2010b). Because UP has to coexist with both service learning and outreach, a move from *Not Service/Outreach* to an affirmative pattern such as "We are partnership" allows for collaborations and does not create competitive comparisons that could constrain UP's collaborations and future momentum.

Structural Properties of UPartner

The discursive patterns and practices of UPartner (UP) that structure its activities, including *Connection, Hopeland, Confusion,* and *Not Service/Outreach* were combinations of rules and resources, showing the available rules that organizational participants drew upon in their everyday conversations about their work and the way they discussed differential resources between systems. In addition to the everyday ways that organizational participants chose to communicate about the organization, there were several key structural properties of the larger social systems that influenced the participant's communication choices. Giddens (1984) argues, "Structural principles can thus be understood as the principles of organization which allow recognizably consistent forms of time-space distanciation on the basis of definite mechanisms of societal integration (p.181)." For example, Giddens (1984) uses the example of tribal societies consistently employing communal practices, kinship, and group sanctioning as structural properties of their social system. By contrast, this research takes place in the United States, which is a class-based society with a market economy that is governed

democratically. This research was inspired by a conflict of democratic and market discourses in public higher education. In the discursive patterns and practices of UP, as detailed in this chapter, structural properties of the wider social systems of public higher education in the United States were echoed in participant discourse. In this section, I return to the metaconcerns of this project through a focus on the structural properties of democracy and the market.

Democracy as a Structural Property of UP

In the U.S., democracy is a contested term that invokes opposition and debate (Johnson, 2006). Most Americans relate the term to the ideals of freedom and equality. Barber (1984) argues that strong forms of democratic practice involve greater participation rather than an overreliance on representative politics. For example, strong democracy is often tied to citizenry, laws, participation, public goods, accountability, and transparency (Ganesh, Zoller, & Cheney, 2005). However, as foreshadowed in the introduction, the participatory goals of democracy are thought to be in peril due to powerful market interests that serve to "colonize" the American public domain (Deetz, 1992). Public universities are debated as a hopeful space where democracy can still flourish, but even these universities have been criticized as pandering to corporate interests (Aronowitz, 2000). Simply put, a common way of describing democracy in the U.S. is that *democracy is contested and vulnerable to market influence*. Much like democracy is framed as an underdog and market influence is framed as dominant, UPartner (UP) was also described as vulnerable.

Besides an overall tenor of democracy as vulnerable, several other structural properties of democratic discourse were echoed in communication about the organization

of UP. Price (2008) found that educators often do not equate democracy with voting or political parties, but rather emphasize democracy as an approach to decision making and "empowered and active discursive participation by all community members (p. 135)" Decision making and participation were also a central concern of UP, and in particular, the structures of *Connection* and *Not Service/Outreach* fashion community members as important citizens with critical knowledge. UP participants were keen to criticize any insinuation of superiority by university members, and to stress inclusion and participation. The sarcastic ways in which several participants described faculty served to level the playing field and follow democratic notions of equality in decision-making and participation.

Much like ideal democracy takes into consideration everyone's vote as equal, it was important for UP participants that both university and community concerns were taken into account in university practices. UP participants believed that the public university should be for the "public good." When participants discussed how everyone should feel comfortable at the university, this highlighted that the university itself was public and should not belong to specific populations. The discussion of the structuration of partnership in the next chapter will also address the ideal of equality.

UP participants stressed the desire for underrepresented communities at the university to be included in meaningful ways. As seen in the structure of *Hopeland*, this included a focus on incoming and refugee communities. These desires echoed larger structural properties of democracy in the United States, and our history as a multicultural nation. It also spoke to national debates around the issue of U.S. democracy as a representative democracy. For example, at the time of this case study, populations that

do not represent the U.S. citizenry in terms of demographics including citizenship, class, race, and sexual orientation lead the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Likewise, populations that do not fully represent the people of U.S. states lead our public universities. Many Americans desire greater diversity in government, like UP participants desired greater diversity in higher education. This desire will reappear in the next chapter's discussion of the difficulties of partnership.

Finally, a hallmark of democracy in the United States has always been the people's desire to build a better nation through conflicts, hard work, and innovation, often told through the stories of immigrant success. This "American Dream" story of democratic change and meritocracy is often invoked in nationalistic discourse and could be seen in the conversation about UP. Although UP was a small organization, its participants were working hard at making connections and building a better university despite resistance from "distanced and confused" intellectuals. Hopeland was often described as an important center for incoming populations to connect to the university, and in turn for university members to learn from the wisdom and rich cultural histories of Hopeland residents. Also, it was important for UP participants to not be considered service or outreach. This again promoted working together, and the hope for organized groups of individuals to make meaningful changes in public institutions.

Market Discourse as a Structural Property of UP

In the structuration of UP's activities, participants often spoke about the organization in ways that invoked larger social structures of market influences and the economy of the United States. These were often manifest in terms of competition, profit, and scare resources. For example, an important aspect of UP's structure of *Connection*

was the ability for the organization to connect both community and university systems to material resources. This type of *Connection* echoes market realities such as the need for money for tuition in the form of scholarships, money for faculty to start research projects, and money for Hopeland to expand. In these cases, students would not be able to attend the university without UP's funds, faculty would not engage in community based research without such funds, and Hopeland would continue to be overwhelmed without the funds and space to expand. In these situations, UP participants had to accept the larger market realities of limited resources, which in turn shaped their discursive practices and discussion of what they do.

Because UP was able to connect participants with allocative resources, many participants saw it as a powerful organization. According to Giddens (1984), "It is clear that the garnering of allocative resources is closely involved with time-space distanciation, the continuity of societies across time and space and thus the generation of power" (p.259). Being associated with UP allowed community organizations to leverage for more grant money, and allowed faculty the funding to sustain their research projects. However, the distribution of resources was even causing resentment and jealousy among UP participants, as seen in the *Hopeland* structure, and the case of the Hopeland capital campaign. Several participants felt that UP should even out their resource distribution and tie it more directly to higher education attendance in order to benefit community residents who had historical roots. In this way, competition was echoed in participant discourse as they grappled with economic realities in their activities.

However, for the most part, UP participants often discussed their activities as resistant to market discourse. The *Not Service/Outreach* pattern characterized UP in

inverse relationship to two types of work that have explicit power differences and ties to market discourse. The connotations of service and outreach are that those in power help those who are not – in this case, the university system would be seen as donating resources to the community system. As many participants discussed, service was a common way for the university to describe work in communities, and also for community organizations to describe work in their own communities. It is also a common way that major corporations in the United States discuss the communities they are located in – through "community relations" or "outreach" functions whereby corporations give back to their communities. Often, this outreach consists of a small percentage of allocative resources given back to communities in various forms that can also be associated with advertising. Service and outreach are often conceived of as ways to maintain an organization's reputation, thereby protecting its profitability.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I addressed the first research question of this dissertation: *How do UP participants structure their organization? In what ways are such structures enabling and/or constraining?* I organized my analysis in three main sections. First, I offered five structures that UP participants drew upon to guide their everyday explanations of the organization: *Connection, The President's Office, Hopeland, Confusion,* and *Not Service/Outreach.* In the analysis of each structure, I discussed the rules for speaking and also the resources that were invoked by participants. University participants were discussed as having resources such as grants, scholarships, and the ability to control time and space by controlling the "pathway to" higher education and centralizing activity at the university locale.

After discussion of the rules and resources involved in the five structures of UP, the second main section of this chapter explained how these every day conversations about the organization also drew upon structural properties of the larger systems of the United States and public higher education. I argued that the structural properties of the market, social class, and democracy were invoked in descriptions of UP. In the next chapter, I discuss my second research question and analyze three structures from conversations with UP participants about partnership: *reciprocity, sustainability,* and *difficulty*.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE STRUCTURATION OF PARTNERSHIP

In Chapter Four, I offered an initial response to the first research question of this study:

> RQ1(a): How do UP participants characterize the organization's activities?
> RQ1(b): What kinds of rules and resources do participants draw on, reproduce, and want to transform?

While I discussed foundational patterns of the UP system, and discussed the structuration of the organization of UP in general, I bracketed the discussion of "partnership" because of its import. This chapter offers greater detail on the structuration of partnership as an important aspect of UP's activities.

Structuration involves developing, selecting, and adapting working structures (Harter et al., 2005). Structures are always a combination of rules and resources that are instantiated in social practices (Giddens, 1984). Giddens (1984) also asserts a duality of structure, where structure is both constructed and maintained through the activities of actors in social systems. The process of structuration, or drawing from these rules and resources, offers opportunities for interpretation, resistance, and adaptation across multiple contexts (H. E. Canary, 2010a). In this chapter, I follow a similar organization to Chapter Four, and I show how participants drew upon and reproduced discursive patterns and practices in the structuration of partnership. These patterns were

simultaneously enabling and constraining. I also show how participant discourses adapted larger structural properties of social systems, such as features of democracy, while resisting market discourses. Understanding how participants structured partnership is important foundational descriptive work that helps understand this increasingly important educational practice and how it seeks to transform public higher education.

While initial studies of partnership offer some concepts of best practices (i.e. (Hunter et al., 2010), this research offers a critical analysis of how participants in one public university structured partnership. The work of partnership is interesting because, as discussed in the previous chapter, it seeks to connect the activities of the two social systems of community (as defined by UP as a distinct geographical area) and university. The intersection of these two systems is a productive site for examining activity as well as understanding how contradictions over discursive patterns and practices can be generative mechanisms that can lead to structural change (H. E. Canary, 2010a).

There are several layers to this analysis chapter. First, I explain and analyze the rules and resources employed by participants in the structuration of partnership. Similarly to the Harter et. al. (2005) study on the structuring of invisibility, my analysis involves several discursive patterns and practices that participants employed to reproduce and at times resist contextual understandings of "partnership." These included discourses of *reciprocity, sustainability,* and *difficulty*. I explain and analyze these discourses including how rules for speaking combined with resources. These patterns and practices coalesce in the structuration of partnership. I then discuss how each pattern is simultaneously enabling and constraining.

After I discuss and analyze the discursive patterns and practices that structure

partnership, the second main section of this chapter proposes and describes three types of resources used by UP participants in their desire to overcome the significant power of the university system. These resources include *code-switching, gatekeeping,* and *empathy*. I offer several examples of each resource and its role in the structuration of partnership. These resources show a contrasting power to the material capacities of the university system. Throughout the course of this chapter, I argue that the university system had significant resources that made it a very powerful system. However, *code-switching, gatekeeping,* and *empathy* illustrate how community participants employed communicative resources in order to leverage their power. I provide examples of how each communicative process organizes time and space and provides a notable source of authoritative influence.

The third main section of this chapter focuses on how the discursive patterns and practices analyzed in this chapter (*reciprocity, sustainability,* and *difficulty*) echo or appropriate what Giddens (1984) calls "structural properties" of the institutions in which they are embedded. This part of the analysis illustrates the advantages of structuration theory in drawing attention to the larger ideological struggles surrounding public higher education, as foregrounded in the rationale for this research. I discuss the structural properties that can be seen in *reciprocity, sustainability,* and *difficulty*, including an analysis of how democracy and market discourse impacted the participants' everyday conversations.

Structuring Partnership

Reciprocity

The structuration of partnership involved the pattern that participants discussed partnership work as mutually beneficial. This was foreshadowed by my discussion of current notions of partnership as when Hunter et al. (2010) write, "At the core (of partnership) is a philosophy that values community knowledge and university knowledge equally." In this case, reciprocity was an important way that participants discussed partnership, taking several forms. First, participants discussed an ideal form of reciprocity that could be achieved or was being achieved in some celebrated partnerships. This ideal discussion did not mention any imbalance in resources between university and community systems. Likewise, the second type of reciprocity discussed was relational or interpersonal, not mentioning the resources of the systems involved. Finally, although participants stressed reciprocity as important to partnership, they sometimes contrasted UP partnership to historical patterns of inequity, in which they explicitly discussed the unequal resources between the community and university systems.

Ideal Reciprocity

Because of power differences between the university and UP communities, seen in the disparity between resources such as funding and educational attainment, participants recognized that a truly reciprocal partnership between the two systems was ideal. However, despite this imbalance, many of the participants characterized partnership in ideal ways. Participants mentioned the concept of reciprocity several times by name, and also by other characterizations. For example, one participant explained:

> I know that the University gets, is being, you know it's just reciprocity again at its best because the University gets all the feedback from the community, knows much more about it and then the community goes to the University. It's back and forth like that."

This quote discussed an ideal ("at its best") and mutual ("reciprocity again") exchange of information and influence. The participant in this quote treated the university in equal terms to the community, not discussing hierarchical differences or resource differences. The phrase "back and forth" stressed mutuality. Other participants used similar phrases to explain partnership such as "all benefit," or, in partnerships everyone would "work together" or "bring something to the table." These short phrases stressed reciprocity as mutuality and interdependence, and alluded to equality because they did not explicitly discuss power differences in the arrangements.

Some participants chose to discuss ideal reciprocity by using examples from UP's current work. Hopeland, which I explained in Chapter Four, was summarized in this way: "That is my best example of what partnership looks like. And I think again, critical factors are shared ownership, shared resources, and collective decision making, I would say are those critical pieces to partnership work." The participant further admired Hopeland by saying, "you really do have shared ownership around the table…" In this description, power imbalances that exist among Hopeland members were not discussed, despite dramatic differences between Hopeland residents and university participants. And, in addition to participant praise, Hopeland earned frequent coverage in both university and local press, making it a very powerful part of UP's activity.

Other participants discussed ideal reciprocity in partnership through one word labels like *collaborative* and *respectful*, which stressed mutuality and did not mention resource differences. One participant stated that any compromises that partnership

participants made were "good compromises." Another participant said that partnerships could take many forms, but reciprocity was the key characteristic of partnership: "So it's different, but it's defined by the reciprocity, not by one group or the other group defining the roles of the partner." These short characterizations of reciprocity were ideal, showing a best version of partnership. Later in this chapter, I discuss how partnership was also structured as difficulty, but it is important to note that many participants explained partnership in its best iteration.

Speaking ideally about reciprocity can create a foundation for active involvement by all partnership participants. When all parties feel as though they are adding benefit as well as receiving it, their investment in the partnership is stronger (Hunter et al., 2010). Traditional service learning models have been criticized because they are not reciprocal (Artz, 2001; Butin, 2005). Partnership work, when discussed as ideally reciprocal, allows for all involved to feel empowered despite critical power differences.

Throughout my research, UP was frequently complimented and commended, and many participants' lives had changed in empowering ways due to their involvement in successful UP partnerships. The UP annual report was replete with such narratives. This empowerment may be the reason why many participants in this study chose not to highlight power differences when defining partnership, and many of those who did spoke of power differences in a hopeful way. In other words, although participants may have thought about the problems of partnership, they chose to explain partnership to me in its best iteration in order to create a positive impression.

However, although many spoke of reciprocity ideally, many others troubled such idealistic portraits of reciprocity. The university side of partnership was seen as very

powerful, with their ability to offer resources such as financial grants, scholarships, and degrees that lead to higher salaries. For example, there were few alternatives to where community members could earn a 4-year college degree without having to move out of the community. University faculty usually controlled grant money as opposed to community members. Several scholarship opportunities at the university required letters of nomination or recommendation from professors, not community members. Furthermore, as Dempsey (2009) also found in another study of partnership, university faculty in this case were paid salaries for being involved in partnerships while community members were sometimes volunteers. However, UP did make efforts to fund all resident and community partners in some capacity, and recognized this issue as an important place to create ethical relationships.

While UP had several revenue streams from donations, they relied most heavily on the university for resources. During this case study, the president of the university was changing, and UP relied on the president for operating costs such as staffing. A new president could come in and discontinue funding UP entirely, which would make it very difficult for them to continue operating. Even though UP was under the Office of the President, as discussed in Chapter Four, their influence was not as great as the president. UP staff and advisory board were troubled that they were initially not included in the search for the new presidential hire that could determine their fate, and advocated for inclusion in the process. If UP funding was decreased or cut, community partners that relied on UP financially (such as the Hopeland Center) would be in great danger and could lose important community programs that they helped to build.

University members involved in UP partnerships had significant influence over

what Giddens (1984) calls "organization of social time-space" (p.258). University participants had the advantage in changing policies because they participated in meetings where policy discussions were held, such as faculty meetings and faculty senate meetings. University faculty had the final say in curriculum choices, what was and was not included in the classroom syllabi. They had final say in how students were graded, and grades are both a function of self-expression and self-development that are inextricably linked to scholarship opportunities. University members, not community members, finalized internship opportunities that would be allowed college credit. For example, a participant asked me if my students could help their organization, because they knew that university students had computer skills and abilities, and they knew that I had the ability to create such an internship for credit in the university system. Also, UP desired a graduate student to do public relations, and it was in the hands of my department chair to create and approve that request with administration. Their former graduate student assistant was highly skilled and bilingual and was offered a tenure-track position at the university. They wanted another student with education and experience – the type of experience that is costly in the job market and tied to educational attainment.

In my interactions with UP participants, I witnessed the resources of university stakeholders in several meetings I attended. University participants were able to command attention and credibility in advisory board conversations, and talked most frequently during the meetings. Miller and Hafner (2008) argue that although university participants claim equality in partnerships, they often possess social, financial, and political resources that allow them to dominate the relationship. I noticed that faculty could easily dominate advisory board meetings. For example, one participant

characterized a UP advisory board meeting this way:

> You hear academic, voices from academics, you hear voices from administrators and then you hear sort of almost routinely marginalized community voices that don't quite understand what the university's talking about in terms of challenges. And so I think we're all showing up with different hats; community member, academic, activist and so forth.

In this quote, the voices of the community were "routinely marginalized" and did not understand "what the university's talking about in terms of challenges." This painted the troubling picture of the university overwhelming the community voices with their own agendas or challenges without an ideally reciprocal involvement.

In the advisory board meetings, several community members told me that they often did not understand what faculty was saying, but thought it was their responsibility to go home and learn those words and phrases rather than have the faculty member describe things differently. One community participant told me that they infrequently talked during the meetings because they were "swept away" by the "deep" conversation, and "You feel like you need, I need to go back to school…" However, this participant did not harbor resentment about remaining silent, but instead called the university board members "inspiring" and "passionate." Likewise, a famous UP board member from the community, who won a prestigious award in 2009 for "Community Resident in Action," discussed being intimidated by formal education yet was inspired to continue working in the partnership. In these instances, participants wanted to believe in the possibilities of ideal reciprocity. Next, I will discuss another way of structuring partnership as reciprocal, relational reciprocity.

Relational Reciprocity

Among participants, reciprocity was sometimes described as relational or

interpersonal. These examples discussed reciprocity as happening between two people without talking about organizational or systemic differences. One participant said: "I do think that a partnership means you value, you take the strengths of the other partner and that you have to try to see what each partner needs to feel understood and valued and work towards common goals." In this way, partnership was framed as relational because the "partner" was given feelings and needs. In this case, they needed to "feel understood and valued," talking about human (versus organizational) qualities. When partners were personified as having feelings, organizational hierarchies and policies faded into the background.

Forgoing community and university organizations to focus on personal relationships in reciprocal partnerships can obfuscate critical power differences in resources between the university and community systems. Hypothetically, a community member who has a relationship with a social work graduate student may not choose to focus on the fact that the graduate student has funding through the university, is gaining college credit, and is gaining research experience that they can publish under their name. Intentional or not, the university participant could be benefitting from greater material resources in the partnership. Previous research suggests that, in partnerships, community members are often giving volunteer hours as opposed to university members who are compensated by their organizations (Dempsey, 2009). This was happening occasionally in UP. One community member told me that a lot of their friends thought they should be paid, since they put in so many volunteer hours. This was a tension filled comment, given that they were providing important volunteer work to a large university with significant funding and influence. However, the UP director assured me that most of the

organization's soft funds went to community stipends, gift cards, and in many cases, college credit. The director noted that it was very important to continue to improve on those financial and academic arrangements to assure fairness.

I previously discussed the tendency for university participants to dominate conversations and organize space and time and self-expression through authority and agendas. These exemplified domination aspects of structuration. For example, university participants often decided when to include community participants in their classes, how, and by what means. They controlled access to students, internships, scholarships, and in many cases policy changes. When the relationship between a community member and university member is framed personally, such tensions between organizational resources are often overlooked, and resentment can linger.

Here is another example of relational reciprocity that was used to explain the evolution of partnership:

> Well a lot of it I believe is personality. There came to be people working at the university who also lived in the community who connected with some people in a, in a more personal manner. It wasn't business. And together then, people began talking about wouldn't it be cool if we could work together and do things. So a lot of it was individuals who came together with common ideas as friends before it was a member of (*X organization*) or I'm part of this and you're part of the university. It was more of you and I are friends, maybe we can do something together to get it done.

In this quote, the relational quality of reciprocity was discussed again, and the partnership participants were characterized as "friends" who "do something together" and "in a more personal manner." In this quote, the participant made a distinction that the evolution of partnership was not "business," which again downplayed organizational, structural, or policy elements of partnership. There was also no discussion of resources or goals, instead the characterization was that two friends – one from a community organization

and one from the university – could have an idea and "get it done" without discussion of how, or with what resources. In this way, the partnership was discussed as the reciprocal connection between two people. This personal connection did not involve system resources.

Structuring partnership in relational ways is not surprising. Partnership operates as both a singular and plural noun and a verb in English, and partnership in the United States is often conceptualized as relational. For example, it is common to hear about two people engaging in a "domestic partnership" in contrast to traditional marriage, or people saying "partner" to refer to a romantic relationship that downplays gender and heteronormativity. In professional parlance, a "business partner" could be either a person or an organization. In these ways, partnership is often ambiguous, and operates both personally and professionally.

Rigid bureaucracies are often characterized by their dehumanizing capabilities. Weber (1968) argues that dehumanization increases as bureaucracy develops, turning organizational members into detached experts. By contrast, the fact that participants characterized partnership as relational could be a compliment to UP, which is part of the bureaucracy of the university. Furthermore, Bringle and Hatcher (2002) advocate that, when developing campus-community partnerships, it is useful to think in relational metaphors and models, such as relational initiation, relational development and maintenance, and relational dissolution. Their research links all stages of partnership development to interpersonal communication research, and they make a compelling case for attending to relational development and maintenance.

However, although personal relationships are an interesting heuristic, and one that

everyone can relate to, it could be problematic to think of campus-community partnerships as personal. Organizational differences and complexities are neglected in service of such metaphors. As I have explained, university participants were often paid and/or received college credit while community participants volunteered. In short, structuring university participants relationally, in friendly or casual ways, obfuscated their access to resources, and their ability to reproduce domination.

Talking about partnership as personal could also be detrimental to faculty who were under significant pressure to publish research. While many scholars believe that the personal is both political and academic, there are cultural barriers in research-intensive schools that serve to marginalize research that is too personal. Community based researchers are constantly fighting battles with their superiors over the concepts of rigor, objectivity, and generalizability (Fine, 2008). This is an issue that I explore in greater detail in Chapter Six. To preview, personal ways of talking about partnership could affect the perception of partnership work in retention, promotion, and tenure processes. One faculty member told me that their dean was concerned about putting them on a tenure track because they wouldn't be able to do all those "fun things" with UP – in other words, referencing their disciplinary research as a "fun thing." When using relational terms, it is too easy to simplify partnership work as friendly and fun and neglect resource imbalances – those critical imbalances that partnership work targets for transformation.

Another example of the danger of personalizing partnership for faculty was seen in a successful UP partnership in an elementary school. The faculty members that started the partnership all lived in the community and had children at the school. They mentioned being criticized, such as, "You're only creating that partnership because you

are friends and your kids go to that school. It's not professional, it's just a personal connection." This personal characterization was dangerous, because the faculty members worked strategically to have that partnership be seen as a sustainable research commitment to changing the school system, not just relational development. Relational explanations belied the complexity of their research.

Reciprocity in Contrast

Finally, partnership was often structured through the discursive pattern of acknowledging reciprocity, but also preceding or following (or both) the description with a caveat or contrasting situation. For example, one participant followed an acknowledgement-caveat-acknowledgement pattern when they said

> I see a partnership as working together and working with each other not like, 'Oh I work for you or you work for me or I do this service for you.' For me it's if there are two or three or more organizations that all of them bring something to the table and that all of them benefit from it.

The reciprocal nature of partnership was highlighted in this participant's initial characterization of "working together and working with each other" and in the later characterization that "all of them benefit." The caveat was the explanation that, in partnership, there was no chain of command. In terms of organizations, there was no hierarchy discussed, and "all of them benefit."

With reciprocity in contrast, several members discussed the poor reputation that public universities may have created through historical patterns. In these quotes, caveats about partnership were about dangers such as ambiguous threats and historical mistakes. For example, the following quote offered a caveat first, and then an affirmation of reciprocity:

> It is not a top down, we're coming in to tell you what you need to do or it's university faculty saying, 'I want to conduct research on your community.' It is a reciprocal, positive relationship to which we're both parties.

This quote was an example of a subtle threat - a "we" that comes in to tell a "you" what to do. It was ambiguous who this "we" was, but then, the participant specifically pointed to university faculty who wanted to conduct research "on your community." The "on" in "on your community" could be seen in contrast to other choices such as "with" or "for" the community, which would be more representative of what UP wanted. Therefore, this participant discussed the university as reciprocal, but acknowledged that the university has exercised domination in unethical ways in the past, and therefore could be threatening in the future.

Here is another example of reciprocity in contrast, and a mention of historical inequities in resources and power:

> And for me, that's always sort of stood out about what this, what this means for the university having a partnership in the community. That it's to be reciprocal in every respect. Given the long history that working class communities, historically marginalized communities, have had in relationship to the universities okay, where universities, especially research faculty have tended to sort of come into communities and "study" the community and then not give anything back to the community but go off and do their thing. Publish and do whatever, whatever else they do. And there's been, there's seldom been any benefit to the community as a result of the community opening up their lives, their experiences, their challenges or opportunities right? They've seldom benefitted from that.

This participant explained partnership as "reciprocal in every aspect" and then provided a contrasting situation as a caveat. In the caveat, there was a historical pattern of universities imposing on less powerful communities to be research subjects. The participant was unhappy about research that did not give back or benefit the community – the faculty "go off and do their thing" and "there's seldom any benefit" to community members who were "opening up their lives." In this quote, during the caveat, the

university and research faculty were characterized as uncaring and dominating – there was an emotional quality to the community not benefitting after they have opened up. In this way, although the participant believed in UP partnership as reciprocal, there was a strong and emotional caveat offered in the description.

Another participant shared a similar description of partnership's struggles with historical inequities in power between the university and community:

> Because the university's all about resources. Over there right? We can do this right? And you know, telling people what they can do and (UP does) a good job of saying like hmm, your job is not to task out to these communities. Your job is to hear what these communities mean. And as a result, they are very careful. I don't know, I think they're open to people coming. But they're very selective about who will stay because they are very clear about like no, this is not about you fulfilling your research agenda at the expense of or you doing your project at the expense of…right? What, what are you doing and what is the community doing? Meaning right, both what do you need? What does the community need? What do you want? What does the community want? And they're really good about bringing those things together. So I think that's core to the partnership.

In this quote, the participant set up a historical pattern of university as being "all about resources," and telling people what to do. Then, the participant explained how UP work means that those university members have to become more reciprocal and collaborative instead of fulfilling a research agenda "at the expense of…" The participant's characterization of "expenses" to the community was very interesting. It inferred that the university profited off the community in an unethical way. Since "expense" could be a variety of things, it could also mean that the community was harmed in past research processes. This participant explicitly discussed resources and how the university wields them, and complimented UP for understanding how to navigate difficult issues regarding the partnership process.

Some participants discussed learning about partnership from UP. For example,

this participant started by saying:

> Partnership is working together. I certainly am not going to go in and say, "Here's my programming. I have a set curriculum. I have an agenda for my students. I'm going to plop them down here and expect it to go this particular way." Um, it's more, "Okay, here we are. Here's all the possibilities of what we might have to offer. Here's our knowledge base, or our particular area of expertise. But then you as residents will be leading us in terms of you know, what it is we're going to do here. So that's the partnership.

Later, the participant added that the director of UP had helped them understand this version of partnership:

> And what (the director) has talked about a lot is that the university, we have our things that we get an education and then we can take that information to the west side and share it with others. But, that it's reciprocal; it should be reciprocal, that we are also learning from people who live on the west side of town. And not only are me and my students learning from people on the west side of town but also that something about that knowledge actually comes back and changes the university.

This quote showed how the participant learned about the meaning of partnership through the UP director, and was stressing reciprocity. Furthermore, the director taught this participant that knowledge from the community should come back and change the university. The tone of this exchange was careful, and the participant's word choices were deliberate. When the participant said, "it should be reciprocal," this was a hedge that partnership was not always reciprocal everywhere.

For many community and university participants, skepticism lingered about partnership. This skepticism could create avoidance, since faculty might avoid the work entirely rather than risk a reputation of being labeled as someone who does research "on the community" on unequal resource terms. Coming from an institution that controls so many resources, faculty could harbor guilt at access to such power. If a professor can't be an ideally reciprocal partner, she may not try to be a partner at all. Disengagement

could become a dysfunctional way of redress or reparation for the past mistakes of universities. Even in this dissertation project, I have had doubts about if my study will be reciprocal enough, or if the organization will resent me for interfering. I have thought it would have been easier to choose a less controversial topic that I could navigate entirely on my own.

In sum, many participants felt the need to qualify reciprocity by invoking historical inequities and structures of the past. Participants believed that UP was working toward reciprocity, but could not entirely abandon contrasting university characterizations that have been sedimented over the years. These past practices indicated lingering resentment, as in "It hasn't always been great, but now we're working more mindfully." As in Dempsey's (2009) study, the participants in these quotes were attuned to power imbalances and critical of the university, even though many of them were university staff and faculty.

Enabling and Constraining Features of Reciprocity

Reciprocity can both enable and constrain the work of UP. When reciprocity is structured as ideal, it helps UP's efforts to attract resources. If members of partnerships discuss their work in ideal ways, it will encourage more funding and can work toward rebuilding trust in the university and fulfilling hopeful expectations. Many university participants and community organizations benefit from UP partnerships. Some participants do appear to have ideal situations in their current partnership work. Also, to speak of partnership ideally makes a compelling case for advocacy. Sharing best-case scenarios encourages more attention from students, faculty, and departments. The partnerships that get the most attention in local media are the most successful ones.

Therefore, in the case for attracting more resources and interest, ideal reciprocity is very engaging.

However, when it comes to community participants, there may be concern about the use of "ideal reciprocity" to characterize partnership. Speaking of reciprocity ideally can create the false characterization that there is across the board equality in all partnerships. When talk sets up partnership as ideal, it does not create a compelling argument for system changes. In other words, ideal reciprocity shifts focus away from future system change. If partnerships are going ideally now, the case for changing departmental structures is weak. The goal of change is the critical work of partnership. As seen in qualified reciprocity, if current structures remain unchanged, there is the possibility for past mistakes to linger and cause resentment. UP did not focus on redress like affirmative action policies, yet it also did not want to neglect historical inequities. While it desires ideal reciprocity, UP wants university systems to change. Therefore, idealizing the status quo is constraining to organizational goals.

Furthermore, speaking of reciprocity as an ideal can set up a standard that is daunting to UP's desire to recruit more faculty to be interested in partnerships. While ideal partnership sounds appealing, there are already significant barriers to faculty involvement in community-based research, and speaking idealistically about partnership could also create a pressure that some faculty will avoid. From my research, I have talked to participants who would view this as a good pressure, and who only want to encourage faculty who are seriously interested in reciprocity. However, if the goal of the organization is to encourage more faculty members to become involved in partnership work, ideal reciprocity could inadvertently become another barrier to engagement.

Next, given UP's goals for systemic change, relational reciprocity is a constraining way to structure partnership. It simplifies a very complex arrangement of resources, and again echoes the problems of ideal reciprocity. While there is no doubt that people in UP can become friends or have personal relationships, powerful institutional donors want outcomes highlighted that go beyond the cultivation of personal relationships. In order to attract donations and resources, outcomes need to be assessed and promoted. During my observations, UP seriously grappled with the need to quantify or illustrate its impact in order to attract more funding. Speaking of partnership relationally constrains funding and advocacy goals because it downplays the broad scope of partnership and its impacts. Speaking of partnership as personal is also not helpful to those community members who are not being paid or receiving college credit for their work. As I mentioned earlier, many community residents are benefitting from stipends or college credit, so this point is directed to those who may not be officially participating and only giving volunteer hours. Furthermore, UP wants community-based research and partnership work to gain credibility in retention, promotion, and tenure (RPT) processes. Unfortunately, in a strong research university culture, speaking of partnership as personal is not helpful in making community based research attractive to RPT committees.

Finally, through qualified reciprocity, participants are repeating narratives about how universities have historically taken advantage of communities. This is enabling to the work of UP, because it reproduces the case for funding, advocacy, and systemic changes to support community partnerships. Qualified reciprocity repeats and reaffirms the case for attention to community based issues. The constraining aspect of such a structure is that it can invoke defensiveness or guilt on the part of the university, which is

the biggest benefactor to UP's work. In conversations with the UP director, I noticed how she foregrounded the support from the university. Therefore, qualified reciprocity is a pattern that needs to be carefully reproduced.

Sustainability

The next pattern involved the rule that participants described partnership activity as sustainability. The topic of sustainability is frequently invoked in interdisciplinary literature, and commonly linked to conversations about nonprofit organizing (Frumkin, 2005). UP was both an academic department and a nonprofit organization, therefore, discussion of sustainability was not surprising, since the concept is of substantial interest to the nonprofit community because of increasing competition for funding as well as corporate encroachment on typically nonprofit enterprises. Sustainability is often linked to resources, as I will show in this case, and can invoke larger tensions with market forces.

In talking about partnership, several participants mentioned sustainability explicitly. One participant worked with UP to create a partnership that was quite small in the beginning: "But they're also always asking, "Well how do we sustain this?" Right? … And so they're interested in sustaining that effort not just doing it once and having it go away." Much like reciprocity, sustainability was also discussed as relational, and participants used relational terms such as commitment: "I mean what makes it a smart partnership, is both entities have to be committed and have to see the commitment of others." Another participant said that partnership "requires a long term commitment." Yet another participant described:

> These people are right here. Faculty are right here. It's about this relationship so it's like you can't just sort of come and look at these specimens and make your little research conclusions and walk away from it. I think it's, it probably feels

> like a commitment, a human commitment that's a little different that maybe some
> people want to take on.

In this quote, the participant set up partnership as between university faculty and community members, and used relational terms, again downplaying organizational structures to shape partnership as a commitment, "a human commitment." Partnership was discussed as something you can't walk away from, something relational that you take on in a committed way.

However, while some participants spoke relationally, others spoke strategically about the sustainability of partnership. For example, another participant said, "It takes time you know? So it takes a commitment on UP's half and that department's half to continuing to learn and reevaluate and understand. You don't sell this in one meeting right?" In this quote, partnership was shaped as a commitment, but a very strategic institutional commitment. Such a commitment was time consuming and a continual learning process.

In addition to the use of the term commitment to describe sustainability, participants similarly discussed sustainable partnerships as "long term," or perpetuating over space and time. One participant elaborated, "… you are coming together around a common goal and you are dedicated, long term, to communicating and working together about how you can build off of each other's skills and resources to achieve that goal." Another participant noted, "In this work, you have to be here for the long run. You have to. And so I think that's been the most difficult but the most rewarding learning experience is that it just takes a long time." These patterns of long term, long run, and long time all again invoked the general concept of sustainability, to outlast short-term

interest. However, “long” is relative, indicating some type of expectation and hearkening to larger systemic conversations. “Long time” could be a way to invoke university tenure requirements, because faculty might not be interested in research that takes a long time due to pressures to publish. With community participants, it could take a “long time” to be allowed university credit or be allowed into university classrooms as teaching assistants because of the bureaucracy of the university.

Several times, sustainable partnership was discussed as the evolution from something small to something that achieved sustainability or even growth. One participant described this process in general, and then I will share two more specific examples. First, a general description:

> Each program, I mean certainly the program I've been involved in you know, started small and then it just keeps growing and growing in really kind of a healthy way. You know, so there's enough support to make it work. It's working. So in a way, it doesn't need more (resources) but, it wouldn't hurt. I like the way it's gone. It fits with my way of working that you start with an idea and start small and don't try to push it like with the real top down. Here's this big structure, let's do this huge thing - boom. But you start little and then it grows the way it should because of the needs that arise or the systems that you figure out work.

In this quote, the participant described a partnership starting small and then getting to a point where it was growing – where it was working with the support it already had and did not need more resources. This would move a partnership out of overreliance on resources which could be used as mechanisms of domination. However, the participant grappled with a desire for the program to grow or garner more resources (“it wouldn’t hurt”) but then returned to discussion of a partnership growing within the natural system it occurs. This quote briefly touched upon a growth discourse typically associated with the market and capitalism, but then returned to sustainability as the appealing goal.

Another participant also offered a similar discussion of partnerships starting small

and then growing to become sustainable. In this example, the participant also discussed reciprocity:

> And I think now, I think of some of the parents we've worked with, we've been with them for a year and it wasn't until very recently that they finally started telling us what we need to do and what we need to learn. Where for a whole year you know, we provided options you know, we had lots of conversations but, it took over a year you know, just a little over a year but, it took a whole year for the parents to finally either trust us enough or be comfortable enough with the fact that we're there um, and present that they said, "You know what? We have ideas too and we want to do these ideas." It took a year you know? Like, that's a long time. And people from the university think that you can build trust and those sorts of things in a very short amount of time and you can't.

After this story, the participant joked with me that community participants would look at university participants and say, “Wow, you’re still here? Well maybe we should talk some more.” Building sustainability was haunted by skepticism about university involvement, and in this characterization, it was the university partner that needed to “build trust” while the community participants were depicted as inherently trustworthy. Building trust in this example is related to sustainability because short term involvement could indicate a desire to acquire quick access to resources and then leave, while long term involvement would mitigate that risk.

This juxtaposition between university and community highlighted the unequal distribution of resources in the process of creating sustainability. It showed how the partner with more resources (the university) was the one under suspicion. The university was discursively framed as having the capability to do harm while the community was not. As a result, the onus appeared to be on the university to create the sustainability. For example, a participant argued that the university should dedicate a graduate student to one of the partnerships instead of having a bunch of disconnected service learning students: “We know that twenty hours with sixty students isn’t going to do anything like

a student for two years who is embedded with faculty support and doing the research and building relationships in the community, right?" This pressured the university to dedicate the resources of a graduate student, presumably a paid research assistant. Another participant shared a similar story, both in regard to building trust and sustainability as well as facing suspicion:

> It took a few years for the school to really believe that you know, again, given the history of these sorts of relationships, the school was a little suspicious. You know, what are you guys trying to do here? And teachers aren't, you know, they don't open up their doors to whoever the university wants to come down and study them, which is what they perceived this as. What is the real commitment that you have? And so UP helped us reassure the school that this was a tangible, sustainable commitment on the part of the institution and the student faculty members. And not only that, we also had a personal interest in making sure that the school changed its culture from a very deficit based culture to a very, very much of a, of a cultural assets based culture. Which is I think is where we're heading at that school.

This quote depicted community participants as suspicious and university participants as needing to build trust and sustainability. The story explained that UP acted as a way to reassure a commitment, because UP connected these systems and vouched for their credibility and sustainable intents.

Finally, moving the university out of the role of financial supporter was discussed as another aspect of sustainability:

> Participant: We both have to work for it to be sustainable. For it to last beyond the individual student or faculty or administrator that may be involved.
> Me: Yeah. So you see sustainability as part of the partnership.
> Participant: Oh! Crucial. Crucial. So, so programs that begin there have to have, have to be embedded sufficiently in the community and in the institution to be able to be sustainable beyond whatever spark ignites it in the first instance. Yeah, it, it, it, because there, you can't buy the partnerships. You can't pay for all the partnerships. There aren't the resources to do it. So part of the genius of it, when it works well, is that it taps into the, the uh, inherent, which is the aspirations and goals in the community and at the university to where they, they perpetuate themselves if they work.

This quote explained that if each party was invested in the partnership their desires to work together could perpetuate the work with or without resources from the university. In this way, moving toward sustainability meant moving away from dependence on the university's resources and ability to exercise domination, while also building trust. This participant envisioned such sustainability as a win-win, because the university and the community would both tap into aspirations and goals that would perpetuate themselves.

Financial independence could benefit all involved. A community participant told me that they would feel more secure if their revenue streams were diversified instead of depending on the university. Yet, they expressed fear that the university would not sustain UP, again in light of the president transitioning. Market realities proved that financial sustainability was a more difficult goal for community participants to achieve since they were starting at a disadvantage when compared to the university. In other words, in the goal to achieve sustainability, it would be a mistake to assume equality among campus and community participants when resources in this case were in favor of the larger university budgets.

Enabling and Constraining Features of Sustainability

Sustainability as a patterned way to discuss UP's activities both enabled and constrained the organization. Funding agencies are attracted to programs that can demonstrate sustainability; therefore, stressing sustainability is helpful in garnering support and making the case for student and faculty involvement. The fact that a partnership is sustainable implies that the project tapped into an important ongoing need of both campus and community, and is an attractive candidate for further funding. Being sustainable assists change efforts because it attracts resources, such as UP is seeking from

upper administration and the Vice President of Research. For example, Hopeland has been successful in their capital campaign because they have shown that the partnership works so well and has lasted so long.

If faculty members believe that partnership will offer them a sustainable research situation that their students can engage in, they will be more attracted to the program. Again, a few Social Work faculty members were involved in Hopeland, which was getting a new facility and becoming an important part of the community. Faculty and students involved in Hopeland knew that they could count on their partnership to be stable. However, in the development of new partnerships, this high expectation for sustainability could thwart faculty and graduate student involvement. If the expectation for partnership is that it takes at least a year to even get going, faculty (particularly on the tenure track) may avoid such work because of pressures to produce research and publish research at a faster pace. Also, if a faculty member did not engage in a sustainable partnership, they could cause disappointment amongst community members. For example, faculty members who set up partnerships and then moved out of state. I often heard disappointment that the university did not try to retain these faculty members.

Desiring sustainability can also constrain participants from seeing that partnerships that are unsustainable can also be an asset. Opening up structural possibilities to allow short-term projects could be innovative and educational. For example, UP had a dialogue program between the community and the university. It was not sustainable because the community members were not satisfied with "sitting around talking" with university members. Dempsey (2009) similarly found that, in a study of another campus-community partnership, community members preferred to talk to other

community members rather than university constituents. University constituents can intimidate others with their higher levels of educational attainment, knowledge of the university system, and professional affiliations (Miller & Hafner, 2008). The fact that dialogue programs between the university and community, even through UP, were not sustainable highlights a critical contradiction between systems, offers an important lesson for partnership work, and could be seen as an important opportunity for innovation. Partnership attempts that are not sustainable offer important insights into strategizing change.

Difficulty

The final pattern followed by participants when discussing partnership was to discuss the difficulty of the work. At several events, I witnessed the director of UP following this pattern in speeches. The director discussed reciprocity and the benefits of partnership; yet never failed to mention how difficult the work was. Several participants simply labeled partnership as "difficult," such as: "Collaborating, partnering is really difficult work." Among other participants, sometimes this difficulty was talked about as difficult conversations, constant change, or doubt about the university.

Difficult Conversations

Participants often discussed how partnership was not easy because those involved in partnerships needed to have conversations about resource differences: "Those are conversations that are sometimes very difficult to have and can be very uncomfortable but that need to happen." In particular, partnership could go beyond discomfort to cause conflict such as when one participant described:

> You have a product and it begins to function and there's always disagreement. If there isn't disagreement, there isn't any growth. You have to have disagreement. You have to have things that aren't going to work, things that have to change in
> order for something to be successful.

This quote showed how partnership could lead to disagreements among partners. However, the participant stressed that such conversations were crucial – "You have to have disagreement." Furthermore, these disagreements could lead to growth. So, partnership was described as difficult conversations that lead to growth and change.

Another participant also characterized partnership work as initial difficult conversations:

> There's a lot of times when you're around that table and you notice that everybody says, when they first come, when everybody first comes to the table, they have the idea that *I want this*, *I need this*, and that needs to take a shift and change into *we need this*. *We want this*. Only then will it be a partnership.

This quote showed both rules of difficulty and reciprocity. When the participants can become a "we," they are looking out for each other's mutual interests. In other words, partners could start out as self-interested and run into problems, but as the partnership matures toward reciprocity, the difficulty recedes. When this happens, this move toward a "we," partnership can work – "Only then will it be a partnership." The move from "I" to "we" has been examined in the context of interorganizational collaborations. Lewis, Isbell, and Koschmann (2010) write:

> From a we-orientation, the collaborative process is a group accomplishment wherein all members have equal stakes in the larger endeavors. Not only is there a strong drive for equal participation but also the value of absolute agreement is often just as prized. (p.467)

However, like the UP participant, the authors also note that such a move can only be predicated on a foundation of trust among collaborators (L. Lewis et al., 2010).

The move from “I” to “We” was an attractive concept for UP staff. In a staff meeting that I attended, a marketing consultant was brought in to discuss UP’s organizational image for their next public information booklet. The staff discussed many core concepts of the organization, but really liked the concept of moving from “I” to “We” and considered making that tagline their focus for the booklet. The UP director mentioned that the concept of “I” to “We” could be problematic, but there was not much discussion. This could be because the UP staff was well aware of the problematics, or because the appeal of the concept outweighed their concerns. However, I left the meeting concerned that the concept could be too simplistic and hide power balances, especially in light of the interviews I had conducted. For example, using “we” inappropriately can often be the cause of conflicts, and in my own personal experiences with mediation and dialogue processes, the reverse is advocated: avoid the use of “We” and speak in “I” terms in order to take personal responsibility. When the consultant emailed us for feedback I wrote her an email saying:

> One thing I could add is that moving from "I" to "we" is a wonderful concept as well as a very dangerous one. [the director] talked about this in the staff meeting, but "I" keeps power relationships very clear, and "We" can sometimes be problematic because it implies that you can speak for others. So, I know that promotional materials are often very positive, but I'd think of that caveat (email sent 2/17/11).

The consultant was very responsive and emailed back saying:

> I agree that even presenting or re-presenting stories in the interest of promoting a unified ideal can be exploitative or possibly too simplistic. My hope is that any stories we do choose to share will be shared with consent of the individuals who are telling them. Also that providing cameras for community members who are made aware of how the photos will be used will allow them to tell their own visual story. I see a great interest in facilitating open relationships between diverse communities through UP and I hope to be able to accurately represent that with what limited tool-set might be available through a 24 page booklet (email received 2/17/11).

In this email, the consultant showed an understanding of UP and willingness to work within the spirit of partnership presented by the staff. Also, the staff generated ideas to ensure they were not representing the concept simplistically (i.e., complete community agreement, community photographers, etc.).

However, the "I" to "We" has the potential to become a problematic domination structure that could hide critical imbalances in resources. In cases of significant resource differences, many participants in this study discussed the rarity of creating truly reciprocal relationships that would warrant the use of "We." Instead, "We" represents the ideal characterization of partnership, and because of its simple pronoun, it could be seen as relational and not organizational, which does not represent the complexity of the organizational arrangements involved in partnerships. In particular, university participants using "We" terms when not in co-presence with community members could be particularly problematic due to their ability to leverage resources and dominate talk time and conversations.

Whiteness in partnership was another topic that was discussed, but also inspired strategic silences. Although a complete analysis of whiteness in partnership is beyond this study's current scope, I had several participants tell me privately that they believed that UP should involve more historically minoritized community member, and that there should be more historically minoritized faculty members on campus. As discussed in Chapter Four's explanation of *Connection*, UP was sometimes characterized as having a racialized component where the organization offered a way for White university members to meet diverse populations. In other words, difficulty discussed in partnership sometimes contained tensions around representation and race. For example, one

participant commented that any faculty of color added to the university would be an improvement.

While many UP participants were students and faculty of color, three White women and one man of color held the UP staff leadership positions during this case. The advisory board chairs transitioned during my research in the Fall of 2011 from one White man and one African-American woman to two White women. White women held a majority of UP leadership, and many did not live in UP's target communities. At times, I also felt uncomfortable because I was a White woman who did not live in UP communities. Leadership means an ability to control time and space arrangements, such as meeting agendas and organizational goals. Although UP staff worked toward partnership in running meetings and creating plans, leadership positions still meant greater resources.

The lack of local leadership or leadership of color in UP seemed to be a lingering cause of difficulty. For example, I perceived that participants of color may have been doing a great deal of behind the scenes work in code switching and gatekeeping, which I will explain later in this chapter, and could have been symbolic leaders without the recognition. At the end of my research, in December 2011, the organization hired a woman of color to be the assistant director. At their 10th anniversary event, when the new assistant director gave a speech, it was in Spanish, and was received with cheers from many participants. The reaction to her speech in Spanish, which noted Latino/a importance, reaffirmed my perception that UP participants wanted more leadership of color. This new assistant director was warmly welcomed, and added to the diversity of the leadership.

Constant Change

A second notable pattern in how partnership was structured as difficult included the dynamic and constantly changing nature of partnerships. For example, one participant explained, "… the partnership is - it's a work in progress. So it's a constant evolution of what to make it better and the constant communication between both entities." Another participant, reflecting on the unpredictability of these relationships, said, "I would say if there's any definition [of partnership] it's that the definition is dynamic and can change." Another participant told the following story about how partnerships were dynamic:

> Universities are so concerned with time and so concerned with agendas and so concerned with structure… But now, example, like if something goes wrong so to speak or let's say we, you know a partnership is having an event and you know, we thought, okay we'll get like twenty people but, you know, two hundred people come. And you know, we don't have enough food, you're just like okay. What are we going to do? And you just figure it out. So I, I think that also ties into the learning piece where you know before, like for people who come in with structure and agendas and their own ideas, they're not going to be here for very long. The community will know that they're not actually there to work with them, they're actually there to do their own thing.

In this quote, the dynamism of partnership was shown through an example of an event that turned out differently than expected and the people involved had to "just figure it out." This is related to difficulty because the participant implies that people who are not flexible problem solvers will not last – they will find the unpredictability too difficult. Also in the story, the university was set up as dominant and powerful, because there was so much concern with time and agenda and structure and "their own ideas." Giddens (1984) writes:

> Like all disciplinary organizations, schools operate with a precise economy of time. It is surely right to trace the origins of school discipline in some part to the regulation of times and space which a generalized transition to 'clock time' makes

> possible. The point is not that the widespread use of clocks makes for exact divisions of the day; it is that time enters into the calculative application of administrative authority. (p.135)

In other words, schools are institutions that have significant control over space and time and the coordination of bodies such as students. By invoking time constraints and agendas, school employees draw upon institutional rules to ensure their own power. However, in the participant's story, when in the community system, university attempts to bring in agendas and control are destined to fail. In other words, if the university participant would not give up their own agenda in order to work in partnership with the community, sustainability was not possible.

Doubt about Partnership

Finally, a few participants expressed skepticism that partnership was even possible, even though they worked in partnerships every day. This doubt represented another way to express difficulty, and it called into question the efficacy and viability of partnerships altogether. Difficulty through doubt was reflected in the comment of one participant who questioned the impact of partnership work:

> There are expectations that projects are going to be able to transform the neighborhood, when in reality like situations are probably too complex for like one individual program to be able to like completely transform whatever aspect of the community that they're working in.

This remark acknowledged that there were complex forces that affected local transformations, or larger structural impediments and contradictions that were causing problems, causing this participant to doubt the local impact of partnership.

In most of the expressions of difficulty and doubt about the viability of the partnership, the source of the doubt was again the university system, not community. In

many cases, participants from the university were critical of their own institution. In these cases, resource inequities were highlighted. For example, one participant offered:

> I often, I often feel like I can't create a partnership. Not because I don't want to, because I don't see it as, as something that's valuable but, because there's just so few people who are really ready to do it… that's always what I think about is are people ready for partnership? Especially with the university. Are there people willing to participate because, not just because they feel, it makes them feel good to be in the community you know, with people of color you know or with diverse communities. But they're doing it because they ultimately believe that it's going to change the way that they think and do things in their lives.

This quote started with a strong statement of doubt that partnership was even possible. The participant clearly set the university apart ("Especially with the university") as having the resources to take or leave partnership work – to do it as a "feel good" project rather than as an enterprise critical to its identity and role within the community. There was a layer of tension around race as this participant noted that perhaps the "feel good" came from working with diversity or people of color. Finally, the quote also hinted that university partners might be unwilling to make meaningful changes in their lives.

In the next quote, a participant discussed the delicate balance that partnerships must strike, and the inequities that further complicate these relationships:

> I mean I struggle with the equal thing because I don't know if that ever really happens like the university has so many resources and all this backing and stuff like that. But that their opinions, their beliefs, their values, the things that they hold true are held in concert with each other in a way that's really trying to balance those things. And so the partnership is really about, the partnerships seem to really be about how do we do that? Right? How do we do that? And that's tricky right?

This quote again set the university up as a more powerful partner in terms of resources, and this participant focused on "backing," or financial support. This inequitable division of assets created skepticism about the university's motives for partnership work.

This tendency to be skeptical about the university was also highlighted by another participant who shared, “It wasn't until the last like nine [years] that we ever really thought of the university as a partner. They kind of did their thing and would tell the educational community what they wanted. But it wasn't seen as a partnership.” Here, the participant said that the university would dictate, or “tell the educational community what they wanted.” This referenced the resources of the university to demand time and attention. However, the participant acknowledged that, in the past nine years, that has started to change. However, they did not forget that past treatment, and expressed doubt about partnership.

Several participants expressed frustration with how those in the university system could wield resources through subtle means such as trying to force their own ideas, making it difficult for community members. This was similar to previous discussions of the ability of university members to dominate conversations. For example, this interesting story:

> For the first two years, the majority of my work was here in the community and because I’m from the same community, at first even though I thought it was difficult, it wasn’t because the people in the community don’t know what they want. They know what they’re interested in. But when you’re dealing with the university in general, all they know is what they can offer without stopping to think if that’s what the community wants. And when a person already has that idea, this is what I want to do, this is what I want to give or offer, it’s very hard to make them change their mind. It’s very hard to let them know. To begin with, they’ve got to want to listen. They’ve got to want to understand why it’s not going to work or why what they’re offering is not what the community wants. And it’s okay and that’s one thing that they don’t understand that it’s okay to be wrong. Not just because we’re wrong does it mean that we can’t go forward, it just means that we have to change the way that we’re doing things or the way we’re approaching them or the way we’re offering it. And sometimes to think that it’s a failure because it wasn’t accepted is very damaging towards the idea that you once had. So you need, they need to be more open. They need to, they need to understand that in order to create change, you must accept change.

This participant characterized the difficulty with university members as one of stubbornness – arguing their ideas and not changing their minds. The difficulty was having university members listen and be willing to change.

Enabling and Constraining Features of Difficulty

The pattern of discussing difficulty could be enabling because it could help participants anticipate problems and create new goals. Difficult work is also often the most rewarding. When considering the historical weight of structures at public universities, difficulty is also honest. Several times in the research, participants referred to UP as a David to the university Goliath, in other words, as a small challenge to an enormously powerful bureaucracy. To structure the work as difficult may be the most hopeful way of expressing that challenge. Difficulty is not impossibility. When considering the goals of partnership, several of the participants alluded to impossibility. By contrast, difficulty still allows for hope. It could also be attractive to faculty who desire a critical challenge in their work, and who seek complex research results.

However, the discussion of difficulty in partnerships is problematic because it could create doubt about the future and dissuade future participation. Difficulty can focus on physical constraint as well as negative sanctioning. With many participants, when they discussed the difficulty of partnership work, I could sense nonverbal stress in pauses, sighs, and abrupt responses. A few people that I interviewed cried during their discussions, surprising me by showing that the work was emotionally difficult and draining. The repeated invocations of difficulty create a barrier to entry for faculty and

students and community members who are not ready to tackle something difficult, but instead want to engage in something that is "feel good." As discussed earlier, UP participants criticized the "feel good" motive as a reason for engagement. However, the overall repetition of difficulty discourses could trap UP participants in a negative pattern that could overwhelm positive attributes. There are many other positive alternatives to this pattern that were downplayed, such as characterizing the work as rewarding, exciting, or intellectual.

Community Resources and Partnership

In the structuration of partnership, participants often discussed university resources, but several community resources also emerged as important ways for community members to leverage power when interacting with the university system. These resources are important to understand because they do not follow "traditional" notions of resources such as expertise and money. As I have explained, participants were keenly interested in funding and in representation, however, several unique resources emerged that could be seen as important ways for community members to leverage power. In this section, I describe the resources of *code-switching, gatekeeping,* and *empathy,* and propose a possible fourth resource, *legitimation.*

Code-Switching

As I have described earlier, university members often leveraged their resources, purposefully or not, in order to dominate talk time and meeting agendas. To their credit, the UP staff were well aware of the tendency for university participants to take over conversations and agendas, and I witnessed a few incidents where staff attempted to

interrupt this pattern by code-switching. For example, when creating the new "vision" statement for the strategic plan, one of UP's staff members who lived in UP's target communities took the vision statement home to their teenage son and asked him to identify the words he did not understand. Then, the staff member spoke at an advisory board meeting about the excessive use of academic language in the statement, using the conversation with their son to open up a dialogue. Although I knew that several other people in the room had the same concern, this staff member was the only one to mention it. They captivated the board, and commanded significant attention, using their knowledge of the community and its ways of speaking as a resource. This employee leveraged their ability to speak to both community participants and university participants, and commanded time in the meeting to offer an opportunity for the board's development and their own self-expression.

The resource used in this situation is a type of communication accommodation process often referred to as "code switching" (Gallois, Ogay, & Giles, 2005). Because this staff member felt comfortable talking in what could be seen as "community speak" and "university speak," they harnessed a very important communicative power to switch between two ways of speaking. Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) refers to the idea that speakers accommodate their speech styles in order to either create and/or maintain particular identities (Gallois et al., 2005). Two powerful processes in CAT are convergence (I choose to speak like you) and divergence (I choose not to speak like you). A participant can only choose to converge and diverge if they are knowledgeable speakers in both discourses. In my example, the UP staff member was a community resident who had worked with the organization for a long time and was also bilingual.

They chose to diverge from the "university speak" in the vision statement. Divergence serves several purposes, and in this case, the staff member used divergence to encourage "a more situationally appropriate speech pattern" and also "emphasize distinctiveness" (Gallois, Ogay & Giles, 2005, p.126). If a university participant were not raised in UP communities, it would take them a considerable amount of time to access "community speak." This lack of access to "community speak" is a disadvantage for those who want to engage in partnerships.

Several bilingual faculty members who lived in UP communities were also seen as extremely important participants. They had the ability to access several languages as well as "community speak" and "university speak." The ability to be respected as a community member and university faculty member allowed them to discursively move between systems. This comfort in both systems was an important ability. For example, a participant argued that the community understands partnership in a more complex way than the university because of their lived experiences:

> Participant: I used to be very academic with [partnership] when I was up at the university. I realized they probably "get it" less than the residents here on the west side. [laughter] So, I stopped with the academizing language and just said, "You know what, this is what we do" and made it even simpler for the people of the university.
> Me: Really...
> Participant: [laughingly] Yeah. Because I realized when I tried to talk about it in the complexity that really is, that really gets birthed from my partnership work, they, I don't know, they seemed like they didn't understand.
> Me: Huh.
> Participant: …And I think it just has to do with being able to connect lived experiences to it you know? When you're a parent or a student here, living in this community, if someone describes complexity to you, you know because you've lived it or you do live it. It's part of your everyday life. So…it's kind of weird. And I learned that over time, but I definitely didn't do that in the beginning. [laughter]

As this quote showed, the participant was able to speak as a member of both discourse

communities, and had the power to switch between the two and converge or diverge. It also demonstrated that having more ways of speaking gave the participant more available structural choices, and thus more power. Giddens (1984) writes:

> Since any language constrains thought (and action) in the sense that it presumes a range of framed, rule-governed properties, the process of language learning sets certain limits to cognition and activity. But by the very same token the learning of a language greatly expands the cognitive and practical capacities of the individual. (p.170)

Therefore, having the ability to speak multiple languages, as well as knowing the structures of multiple systems, gave community participants more for self-expression and development. In short, code switching was an authoritative resource that emerged as a way for community participants to leverage power when encountering the resources of the university system. In the next section, I will continue to highlight resource differences and unique abilities from UP communities.

Gatekeeping

In several exchanges, as seen in the discursive patterns of reciprocity, community participants expressed disdain for historical misuse of power from the university system. As a result, I noticed that community members were careful when engaging in partnerships. Unlike university members, who were often eager to find new sites of research, community members were often more hesitant to agree to partnership, and this reluctance appeared to create an interesting relationship. Because the community reputation went unchallenged, this unchallenged trustworthiness of community participants acted as a gatekeeping ability to be leveraged against the significant resources of the university.

Gatekeepers are very powerful because they can facilitate or constrain the flows

of information as they decide which messages to allow or disallow (Shoemaker, 1991). Only when community members felt comfortable were they willing to allow an active research process to begin. For example, Hopeland had an advisory board that approved all research requests before they were allowed. In addition, several partnerships were particular about what type of graduate students they wanted working in community organizations because of cultural sensitivity issues and bad experiences with students demonstrating White privilege. A few faculty members told me that they wished to work with certain UP organizations, but those organizations required significant trust building before allowing them to create a new partnership. In some cases, they were simply denied access to certain attractive community organizations.

In these cases, those from the university system started as inherently untrustworthy – the process was in favor of community member gatekeepers. Community members controlled community spaces and time, and university participants had to spend significant time to gain access to community opinions and ideas. Again, Giddens (1984) argues that resources are the ability for actors to control time and space arrangements, and in this way, community participants were able to control what time and which spaces they allowed university participants to access. While university participants could also act as gatekeepers, it was clear that the university desired community participation, and one of the keys to a sustainable research project was community cooperation.

Empathy

In structuring partnership as difficult, another community resource emerged as a way for participants to leverage control when interacting with the university system. This resource was the ability to listen and empathize as opposed to university system

tendencies to dictate or control. Community participants expressed difficulty when interacting with university participants. On the other hand, it was common to hear participants and UP staff commended for their empathy, leveraging their ability to facilitate partnerships. In particular, the UP director was often described in glowing ways, and received a lengthy standing ovation at their tenth anniversary event. Here is one example of how the director was commended for their empathy:

> I had to miss this board orientation meeting, and [the director] sat down with me in the kitchen at the office a couple weeks later and stepped through every little bit of literature and all the history and all that just face-to-face and heart-to-heart. And I don't know, I feel like, I feel like I made a connection with [the director] personally right then.

Likewise, participants often expressed love for the staff. I heard many people saying, "I love…" several staff members at UP.

Community participant and UP staff empathy was also an authoritative resource because it could attract hesitant participants, especially from the university. Because of lingering histories of university exploitation of communities, university participants may be hesitant to work with UP. However, when I interviewed UP community participants, I often felt an instant friendship with them, when at times I expected defensive reactions. I often smiled and laughed my way through many interviews with participants I had never met, yet immediately liked. Likewise, I enjoyed all my time with UP staff, who were incredibly intelligent, warm, and funny, and welcomed me to their office and their meetings. One staff member noted that faculty liked to work with UP because:

> I think it's because it's often, not always, warm and supportive. It feels good to partner and work with us. I think people, some faculty not all, but some feel that we have an understanding of knowledge that will help them start their work in a new place so they don't have to go to the beginning of understanding.

This quote explained that partnering with UP was supportive and warm, and allowed a faculty member to get assistance in starting from a "new place."

Empathy is also a resource because it involves understanding where someone is coming from in order to forge mutual understanding. New faculty participants may not be familiar with community structures and systems, and could lack the memory traces of what works and what does not. In other words, they could be unable to effectively code switch. As I have discussed, faculty who were bilingual and community residents had a great deal of respect in UP, and those who do not live in the community might be daunted to participate. In terms of structuration theory, lack of experience could create ontological *in*security. However, empathy from UP participants can function as a resource to quell insecurity and attract more participation. The ability to create a sense of belonging served as leverage when compared to the university's resources.

Legitimation

I have argued that the university system was often seen as more powerful, possessing more resources and more leverage in terms of partnership. However, there was one notable exception to this pattern that emerged during the interview sessions. One participant articulated another unique power held by the community, a power to not only act as a gatekeeper, but to legitimize partnership:

> All partnerships rely on or they need the community. I think they need the community involved otherwise you just have an idea, an idea that goes nowhere because then it becomes an illusion which is even worse. But once you have the community involved, then you begin to have like real information and research of why it's going to work and why it's not going to work. Then it's no longer an illusion. It's no longer just an idea. It begins to follow into the process of action and then things begin to happen and once you have the partnership on full process and now it's being productive and you're actually seeing an outcome of it, then everyone around the table is not only sharing ideas but actually taking action upon

them.

This characterization discussed power from community and envisioned assets in contrast to the university's resources. It suggested a community resource in legitimizing an idea and then facilitating meaningful action and change from that process, as opposed to from authority or material goods or traditional leadership. Although only one participant articulated this potential resource of legitimizing, it bears mentioning and warrants further attention. Put differently, this description was so unique that it stood out to me as a notable exception, and an avenue for further inquiry that I will discuss in the Conclusion chapter.

Structural Properties of Partnership

The quotes and stories from everyday communication about partnership structured the work in three main discursive patterns and practices – *reciprocity, sustainability,* and *difficulty*. Participants drew upon these rules and related resources in the structuration of partnership and as they engaged in their work. However, as I have discussed in earlier chapters, the strength of structuration theory is also the related concern with how structural properties of this particular research context also influenced the participant's everyday communication choices. Giddens (1984) argues, "It is always the case that the day-to-day activity of social actors draws upon and reproduces structural features of wider social systems (p.24)." Public universities have to contend with both market forces and democratizing forces in public higher education. Within *reciprocity, sustainability,* and *difficulty,* the wider social systems encompassing public higher education in the United States are echoed in participant discourse. In this section, I discuss how democratic discourse and market discourse impact the structuration of

partnership.

Democracy as a Structural Property of Partnership

As I discussed in Chapter Four, democracy is a contested term in the United States. However, many educators believe that an important hallmark of democracy is participation in decision making (Price, 2008). In this way, discursive patterns of reciprocity reproduce features of democracy, because partnership desires inclusive participation. In the United States, democracy is celebrated in this ideal form: every U.S. citizen has an equal vote in our national elections. That being said, the historical realities of voting reveal many discriminatory restrictions by gender, race, and age. A large part of our democracy is not direct democracy but rather representative democracy, which leads many citizens to claim that the United States is not a democracy at all, but a republic.

The key point in this critique is that ideal and critical visions of democracy were drawn upon in conversations about reciprocity. In an ideal democracy, everyone would have an equal say. However, in the United States, the government is heavily criticized. Like the participants in UP discussed reciprocity by contrast, U.S. citizens often bemoan the power of the government and its historical inequities and discriminations. National polls frequently showcase Americans who are dissatisfied with the political system, much like UP participants are dissatisfied with the systems of higher education. Like many UP communities who are underrepresented in higher education, there are several interest groups including women, LGBTQ populations, and ethnic populations who are underrepresented in our national government and seek greater partnership with federal lawmakers. U.S. citizens pay taxes, which they believe entitle them to reciprocal benefit

from the government in terms of public services like schools. The structures of ideal reciprocity and reciprocity in contrast in this research draw upon national conversations regarding the critiques of democracy.

The desire for sustainability invokes the structural properties of democracy in the United States concerning "sustainable development" practices. In current debates, such as the 2012 election debates, presidential candidates often discuss the pros and cons of our democratic system involving itself in sustainable development in other countries. The tensions between service learning versus partnership in the case of UP echo tensions around sustainable development. Much like the United States seeks to create sustainable projects at home and in developing nations and then slowly remove its financial aid, the university wanted to create sustainable projects in UP communities in order to then slowly remove its financial support. However, in return for financial support, our government often expects repayment from developing nations in several different forms, such as natural resources or political solidarity. In UP, financial support from the university also sought a return through increasing the numbers of students enrolled at the university.

A word of caution concerning sustainability and the structural properties of sustainable development is that UP communities could be cast similarly to developing nations. Encouraging such communities to enroll in the university would mean greater tuition income for the university and a more gentrified community ready for market development. UP critics that I have encountered argued that a community with strengths to create and maintain their own programs does not need the university to intervene in order to provide seed funding for social services. UP worked with local populations with

significant historical and cultural roots in the community, who already had local organizations and programs. Several of its partnerships were built upon already existing and successful programs, such as a neighborhood leadership program that predated UP. A critical distinction is that the university did not want to create sustainable programs in affluent White communities on the east side of the city. This sustainable development discourse was also echoed in the tension over the Hopeland project (as discussed in Chapter Four). Much like the U.S. government grapples with sustainable development and its unintentional consequences, I also believe UP was also grappling with sustainable partnership and its unintentional consequences.

Finally, the discursive patterns of difficulty also echoed structural properties of democracy in terms of difficult conversations and problems moving back and forth between "I" and "We." Difficult conversations about representation and inclusion in public process are one of the hallmarks of American democracy, and town hall meetings have been known to degrade into shouting matches. Furthermore, Americans continue to grapple with racial tensions in a nation formed by White privilege and domination. Racial tensions are common in democratic processes, highlighted during the election of Barack Obama in 2008. Our nation's first black president provides a stark contrast to an overwhelmingly privileged White congress. Therefore, the discussion of racial tensions and representation in partnership echo national discourses about democracy. The doubt that partnership is even possible also echoes national doubt that our democracy is working in light of corporate colonization (Deetz, 1992). And so, in all three discursive patterns and practices that structure the work of partnership, larger structural properties of democracy are drawn upon and reproduced.

Market Discourse as a Structural Property of Partnership

Overall, the way that UP participants structured partnership was not aligned with the structural properties of the market economy. The absence of market discourse was notable and was often strategic. Partnership was described mostly as collaborative, community centered, and democratic as opposed to structural properties of capitalism that stress competition, profit, and growth. However, there were a few structural properties of capitalism that were appropriated by participants that warrant attention.

To begin, the structure of reciprocity as discussed by UP participants invoked the structural properties of the market economy in the United States because UP participants were acutely concerned with financial reciprocity as opposed to other ways of creating reciprocal arrangements. Money was a central concern of most UP participants. In other words, in invoking the past historical mistakes of the university, profit was a significant theme in how participants described inequity. Participants expressed lingering resentment over how the university has profited from local communities by researching them. To address this historical profiteering, UP participants expressed the desire for repayment. There was a tension over paid staff versus community volunteers. In sum, while partnership was described as reciprocal, it was often the university that was expected to commit financial resources to UP projects such as grant funding, course buyouts for faculty, and funded graduate students.

The way participants drew upon and reproduced discourses of sustainability set them apart from market values, and related more to nonprofit practice. UP participants expressed some reservations and fear about the university withdrawing funding, and how that would financially impact partnerships. Partnerships wanted to be sustainable to

endure changes, echoed in recent American market recessions. Also, universities desired partnerships to be sustainable amid declining public funding for education. These patterns bear similarity to nonprofit organizations trying to remain sustainable in the context of declining contributions. Sustainability structured partnership as opposed to discourses of profitability and growth. While some participants struggled with the desire for growth, the growth was framed in the context of community needs. I did not hear partnership structured as competitive nor desiring financial profit, and these absences warrant mentioning.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I bracketed the concept of partnership as an important activity, and completed discussion of the first research question of this dissertation. I offered three discursive patterns and practices that UP participants drew upon to guide their everyday understanding of partnership: *reciprocity, sustainability,* and *difficulty.* In the analysis of each pattern, I discussed the patterns of speaking and also the resources that were invoked by participants. I also discussed how these patterns could simultaneously enable and constrain UP's work. In the structuration of partnership, while university participants were discussed as having the most material resources (such as grants, scholarships, degrees, and research and teaching assistantships), they were also discussed as having significant resources such as the ability to control time and space features of UP partnerships (dominating conversations, creating curriculum, managing classrooms). However, community participants also leveraged several resources, such as codeswitching, gatekeeping, and empathy. Finally, I explained how these every day conversations about partnership also draw upon structural properties of the larger systems

of the United States and public higher education. I argued that the structural properties of democracy are more salient to the structuration of partnership than those of market discourse.

In the next chapter, I will discuss my second and final research question. Because the theoretical basis of this study is structuration theory, I argue that the way that organizational members communicate needs to change in order to inspire different actions. This final analysis chapter will focus on how UP participants encounter contradictions in their activities, and how they attempt to change existing patterns and practices and introduce desired new discourses in order to create systemic change. This final analysis will look toward the future, and analyze the power of communication choices to catalyze organizational change.

CHAPTER SIX

CONTRADICTIONS, RESOLUTIONS, AND STRUCTURAL CHANGE

In the previous two chapters, I explained how UPartner (UP) participants structured their organization's activities. In Chapter Four, I explained discursive patterns such as *Connection, Hopeland, Confusion,* and *Not Service/Outreach.* Chapter Five focused on work of partnership, which is central to the organization, wherein I discussed patterns of *Reciprocity, Sustainability,* and *Difficulty.* In this chapter, I move from the structuration of the organization's activities into a discussion about how UP participants encountered structural contradictions in their attempts to create change in the university system. In the critical spirit, I also explain how they planned to resolve such contradictions by targeting detrimental patterns that could be replaced with more socially just alternative patterns. This chapter addresses the second and final research question of this study:

> RQ2: What contradictions do UP participants encounter in their work?
> RQ2(b): How do participants plan to leverage power and resolve contradictions?

There are several reasons why an analysis of contradiction and resolution is important. Practically speaking, in their change efforts, UP participants often talked about how the university system created "barriers" to success. In other words, although UP was created by the university to address a fundamental problem (the lack of representative enrollment in a public university that is supposed to be serving the public

good), UP participants still felt resistance from the university in carrying out their mission to increase enrollment and create collaborative relationships that could enhance the public good. This resistance often frustrated the organization's participants (as seen in Chapter Four's discussion of *Confusion* and *Not Service/Outreach*), who wanted to understand how to overcome these "barriers" and reach their goals of changing the university system.

In addition to the practical benefit of the research question, a focus on contradiction and resolution is also theoretically compelling for a number of reasons. The "barriers" that participants discuss were often the result of contradictions in the university system that were exposed and exacerbated as a result of interacting with the UP community system. Giddens (1984) argues that structural contradictions are disjunctions of structural principles of system organization. H.E. Canary's (2010a) work on Structurating Activity Theory (SAT) is also useful, because it elaborates on Giddens and proposes that intersections between systems are sites where four types of contradictions (i.e., Chapter Two's discussion of primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary contradictions) can emerge. Canary (2010a) suggests that contradictions are "generative" mechanisms because they constitute opportunities to facilitate new structural choices. However, contradictions can also arrest development. In other words, when faced with a contradiction, individuals must make the choice to reproduce traditional and familiar patterns, or create new ones. While Canary's work (H. E. Canary, 2010a, 2010b; H. E. Canary & McPhee, 2009) has largely focused on policy processes, this study extends SAT concepts to facilitate a broader understanding of organizational change.

The central focus of this chapter is on three contradictions that UP participants encountered when attempting to change the university system. It is important to note that participants did not use the language of contradiction; rather, they used the term "systemic barriers" to describe challenging situations where community and university did not structurally align. This chapter uses SAT to analyze several of these situations, and to articulate what type of contradiction is present in terms of the rules and resources involved. This analysis also explains why the contradiction may persist, and how it could possibly be transformed. In several cases, in order to resolve the contradictions, participants discussed new ways of communicating that could change university structures in favor of the public good, what I have called "desired new discourses."

This chapter organization highlights my critical application of structuration theory. For example, Harter et al. (2005) found that neighborhood residents described homelessness as a non-issue in their community, and their "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) patterns impeded social service activities that would support homeless youth living in hiding. In terms of SAT, this would be a quaternary contradiction where neighborhood patterns regarding homeless youth (non-issue) interfered with social service patterns regarding homeless youth (important social issue) and hindered social service activities that would support homeless youth. In order to resolve this contradiction between systems, social service advocates interrupted neighborhood NIMBY patterns, and instead discussed how the denial of homelessness by those in the neighborhood system was both unethical and political (what I would call their "desired new discourses") (Harter et al., 2005). In this chapter, I similarly focus on contradictions as well as communication choices that participants believed would resolve them. In order

to ensure that UP has a supportive environment for change, it is important to attend to structures that could facilitate such changes (Kirby & Krone, 2002).

Besides the extension of SAT contradictions beyond policy processes, another theoretical opportunity in this research question is the opportunity to investigate a collaborative change process. Previous research using structuration theory has focused on change efforts that are initiated by organizational leaders, such as Goodier and Eisenberg's (2006) account of leaders introducing new "spiritual" structures in order to transform an organization's overall story, and Jian's (2007) study of upper management promoting new structures during a downsizing effort. Sherblom, Keranen, and Withers (2002) investigated organizational change that external leaders tried to dictate in a traditional game warden culture in Maine. In all these cases, leaders made critical decisions about the ways that they wanted discursive patterns in the organization to change. They decided the ways that employees should ideally speak and act – without employee participation in the decision making process. Those in leadership roles used their control of resources to try to shape the way their organization's structures would change. However, several of the studies indicated significant resistance from employees and unintended negative consequences when change efforts were not participatory (Jian, 2007; Kirby & Krone, 2002; Sherblom et al., 2002).

In this study, UP participants believed that partnership was a collaborative process, they involved university and community members in their advisory board roles, and they wanted to be reciprocal and value ideas generated by everyone. UP's leadership did not want to mandate changes, but rather invite campus and community participants to reimagine a more favorable university system. However, despite their best intentions, UP

participants often lacked material resources to create change. This did not stop the organization from trying, and in the absence of material resources, UP leveraged their authoritative resources. Therefore, this analysis offers insight as to how participants in collaborative processes planned to use communication choices to leverage power. This concern is aligned with critical applications of structuration that investigate preferred structural alternatives (Harter et al., 2005; Kirby & Krone, 2002).

My analysis explains three contradictions encountered by UP participants. These include: *Deficit Discourses, The Marginalization of Community Based Research,* and *The Containment of UP*. In the remainder of this chapter, I explain how UP participants describe each contradiction, then I discuss the nature of the contradictions through the lens of SAT, and finally I discuss how UP participants attempt to resolve these contradictions through desired new discourses.

Deficit Discourses

Explanation of Deficit Discourses

In 2001, University staff defined the UP community as a group of zip codes that had the lowest enrollment in the university. These zip codes are casually referred to as "the west side," because they are geographically concentrated west of a multi-lane commercial street, a massive railroad system, and an overarching interstate highway. The zip codes are also home to a great number of historically minoritized populations, and all of the public schools are Title One (a designation from the United States Department of Education given to a school where the majority of students are low socioeconomic class). As such, the term "west side" is often explicitly racialized and classed (Buendía, Ares, Juarez, & Peercy, 2004). Buendia et al. (2004) explain:

> The use of the West Side construct was principally a place marker for the racial and classed labels of school populations. Educators who identified themselves as working in West Side schools summoned the category and often coupled it explicitly with signifiers such as "the poor," "the non-White," "the non-English-speaking," "the uninterested," and "the at-risk" in order to define who their students and schools were. (p.843)

In this quote, the characteristics attributed to west side schools by the educators in that study all focused on what the students did not have: money, White skin, English as a first language, interest, and safety (Buendía et al., 2004). In these ways, west side students were characterized as having deficits, and UP participants referred to this type of talk as "deficit discourse."

"Deficit discourse" and "deficit thinking" were terms that UP staff often used during staff meetings and at their staff retreat. Since many staff members were also educated at the university, the term "deficit discourse" was related to similar patterns in the academic departments of staff members such as Education and Social Work. Deficit thinking, in academic conversations in those departments, is often tied to Oscar Lewis (1966), an anthropologist who theorized a *culture of poverty*, wherein the poor have deficit cultural traits (i.e., they are lazy, hedonistic, violent, dysfunctional) that keep them impoverished. Lewis' theory gained popularity and provided policymakers and the public with an academic way to characterize all poor people and perpetuate racist and deficit stereotypes (Foley, 1997). This type of deficit thinking means blaming and oppressing others using pseudoscientific methods, which change throughout time, yet consistently take aim at the educability of low socioeconomic status minority populations (Valencia, 1997). In terms of structuration, deficit patterns have become deeply ingrained in American society and are often reproduced in interaction as natural.

UP participants, in particular staff members, were very sensitive to deficit discourse. As they tried to change the university system, UP participants encountered and discussed such discourse as a major "barrier" to partnership. These structures at the university served to reproduce talk of historically minoritized groups and low socioeconomic classes (the majority of residents in the UP west side community) as pathological, dangerous, and destined for educational failure. Several participants shared examples of such discourse, like how the west side was described as, "People of poverty. That's where the vagrants are. That's where the homeless are. That's where the non-English speaking population is. That kind of thing." Participants were often visibly upset when discussing these characterizations. One participant told me:

> I think a lot of people on campus that don't come over here and that don't work over here, they have that idea of, "Oh the west side, brown kids, high dropout rates, immigrants, a lot of gangs." It's really sad to hear it. Sometimes they don't say it straight out to me but I just, you can tell by the way they express themselves. They use phrases like, "The people over there." Or, "Those people that live over there," or "It's very dangerous over there."

These examples were deficit because the focus was on perceived negative elements of the communities (violence, vagrants, gangs) and qualities the community did not have (money, White skin, English language skills, citizenship, safety). The above quote also repeated the words "over there," inferring that the west side was separate, and for many people on campus, the west side was not their home. Some participants offered examples that were more general or abstract: "There seems to be a negative impact with it, like 'Oh, that's the west side. *Oh*.'" Another participant who taught university courses talked about their students: "The hardest thing for me to hear or to read… is just how deficit people are. How sexist and how racist and all those things, those words that we're not supposed to say, I see that all the time." In this quote, the participant discussed how deficit

discourses perpetuate among university students even though many know what they are "supposed to say."

Deficit discourses highlight several important contradictions between the community and university systems. Participants see such discourse as a "barrier" because it prevents community members from being seen as strong and intellectual. The patterns that are used in the community to describe community members do not match the patterns used in the university, which points to contradiction of signification and domination structures regarding place, socioeconomic status, and race. Furthermore, while community members see themselves as possessing many important authoritative resources, the deficit discourses in the university focus on allocative resources and specific authoritative resources such as educational attainment. Therefore, when these two activity systems try to work together, their discursive patterns of signification and domination do not align, and they see the goals of their activities in contradicting ways. Deficit discourse can be seen as a quaternary contradiction. Canary (2010b) explains that this type of contradiction exists when meeting the needs of one activity system interferes with meeting the needs of another related system. In this case, university goals can be seen as "helping" those who are deficit by allocating resources, while community member goals are to enrich the university and promote the public good. Put simply, deficit discourses frame UP communities as disadvantaged and in need of help, while the community views itself as strong and resists charity. Again, this focuses on perceived patterns that participants discussed. This pattern is one of many available choices. Not all university members use deficit discourses, and as I describe in this chapter, some community members use deficit discourses about themselves.

The quaternary contradiction that I described concerning the goals of the two activity systems is more complex than simply "help" versus "enrich" when you consider resource differences. As you recall, UP was formed because of low enrollment from a group of zip codes. Therefore, the UP community received attention and resources from the university because of a deficit in educational attainment. This is one example of how community members can garner resources from the university for being deficit. Furthermore, several university scholarships (including specific UP scholarships) are available based on financial need, which again directs resources to students who demonstrate a type of deficit. These patterns of relations between the university and the community teach community members that, to garner university resources, community members could strategically engage in deficit discourse. A participant pointed out that it can be beneficial for west side students to describe themselves in deficit ways because of the university's scholarship application processes:

> Students tell stories that are not necessarily about their worth, but they tell their common racial myth about my poor family and we have nothing, rather than coming from strength. Because when the university reads scholarship applications about strength, they tend to think those students don't need.

Therefore, because they can lead to reward, deficit discourses are difficult to interrupt. This puts potential west side students in a difficult situation when encountering the university system.

The power of deficit discourses was a source of anger, frustration, and sadness for many UP participants, and several had emotional reactions to my questions. For example, I asked participants to envision alternatives to deficit discourse, questions such as "*As a UP participant, how do you want people at the university to talk about West Side communities?*" I was shocked that this question, a question I thought could lead to

imagination and brainstorming, often led to strong emotional responses such as anger and tears. One participant got very defensive about the question and grilled me several times about what I was getting at before I explained that I was looking for positive alternatives to deficit discourse. Several participants sighed and suddenly appeared very sad or tired, and several others openly cried in the interview. Here is an exchange that led up to one particularly sad moment:

> I see so many assets when I hear families speak in languages other than English. It's rewarding to me. And I hate when I hear people at the university use language that says that's not valuable. I hate, especially with issues of documentation, I hate when people call others, when students and faculty call it "illegal immigration" or "illegals" or "illegal aliens" because it completely dehumanizes them. And I can't help but think about how hard people work just to survive. And how so few people from the university ever get to see that. And it's not, it's not fair…

This quote ended with the participant in tears, and also made me uncomfortable and emotional. My shock at these emotional moments has a great deal to do with my White skin, English speaking abilities, socioeconomic class, and residence on the east side of the city. I viewed my questions as a chance for participants to reflect and imagine new situations, but they reopened wounds for some participants that I did not predict since the character of my own zip code was not in question.

While participants acknowledged that people in the university system or people outside of their communities perpetuated deficit discourses, there were also several examples of how community members use deficit discourses to describe each other or themselves. This demonstrates that structures of deficit discourses were naturalized among community members in their own system. One participant tearfully told me a story about being called in to a parent teacher conference where the White teacher accused their child of having several deficits, such as being disinterested and not caring

about school. Instead of defending their child, the participant was afraid and disciplined their child and repeated the teacher's characterizations, later realizing that this reaction was a grave mistake. Another participant said, "Growing up from a space where we were poor and did not have a lot, I used a lot of deficit language because society told me that was appropriate to talk about myself in such negative ways."

In these ways, participants acknowledged the sedimented and pervasive nature of deficit discourse structures in both systems of the community and university, and how difficult they could be to identify and change. Community members are also incentivized to repeat deficit discourses, because they can lead to resources such as the opportunity to attend the university. Therefore, while some departments teach about the detriment of deficit discourse, other departments in the university encourage deficit discourse in their scholarship application procedures. But despite the tenacity of deficit structures, UP participants had several strategies for challenging these ways of talking.

Desired New Discourses to Challenge Deficit Discourses

Cultural Wealth

In order to challenge deficit discourses, and resolve this contradictory practice in favor of system change, UP participants had several alternative ways of talking. In order to resolve a quaternary contradiction where university deficit patterns framed west side residents as in need of help and resources, UP participants had several alternatives that instead highlighted west side residents as important stakeholders who could enhance the university system. One such pattern was to emphasize that the west side is "culturally rich." When I first started working with UP, I immediately noticed this unique pattern of description because of its novelty (to me, a resident of the east side) and frequency. In

UP documents and publicity, the west side was consistently and repeatedly referred to as culturally rich. The first page of their 2011 annual report reads: "Guided by faculty from over 42 departments, students found resident teachers, parent mentors, youth researchers, and friends in the seven culturally rich neighborhoods that make up the west side." Likewise, the main page of the organization's website (as of 12/9/11) read: "UPartner (UP) links seven ethnically and culturally rich [city] neighborhoods with the [university] to create pathways to higher education."

Speaking in terms of cultural wealth resolves the quarternary contradiction of deficit discourse by decentering allocative resource imbalances that are in favor of the university and instead recentering the conversation on authoritative resources that enhance the west side. In this process, place, socioeconomic status, and race are signified as beneficial to the university as opposed to detrimental. Here is one participant's justification for the language of cultural wealth:

> It really takes this whole process and turns it upside down when you say to academic department chairs or deans, "No there is a lot of knowledge, there is a lot of cultural wealth that not only helps many members of these communities succeed but makes the institution a richer place to study." Especially given what's happening around us in this, our universe. We need that presence. We need those strategies. We need those insights in our own institution to be this world-renowned internationally competitive, educational space that we want to be.

This participant described the cultural wealth of the community, and how it could enrich the university system. They linked local cultural wealth and knowledge to international recognition for the university and believed that speaking in "enriching" ways about local communities would not only enhance those communities, but the prestige of the university system. Therefore, new patterns of cultural wealth have the possibility of attracting more resources for the university.

Speaking about cultural wealth was such a priority for UP participants that they taught each other and disciplined each other about this type of language. Giddens (1984) argues that powerful structures tend to be coupled with sanctioning. Participants resisted deficit discourses so strongly, that mention of such discourse was also met with their own ways of sanctioning. One participant told me, "You can't bring someone [to the west side] who thinks about communities in such deficit and negative ways. There's no way I'd feel comfortable bringing that type of person here." This strong assertion points to the resistance to and regulation of deficit discourse. Another participant said:

> Certainly I don't want to hear any deficit language. [laughter] I do hear them say the thing, when I'm in a UP context in that, people always use real strength based language about look at all the amazing things that people from other countries and people who you know, who live in this area, look at how much they have to offer our community. You know that that's valued and the differences are valued. And that we can learn from each other.

The laughter in the beginning of this quote was because the participant felt their first statement ("Certainly I don't want to hear any deficit language") was obvious to me since I'd been working with UP. Again, this strong resistance to deficit discourse demonstrates the power of those structures, and the desire to discipline them in "strength based" ways. The discipline also involved gatekeeping – keeping those who spoke in deficit ways out of the community system.

Several times, I thought that participants were being thoughtful in choosing their words to avoid deficit discourse. For example, one participant told me:

> The west side tends to be lower SES, right, socioeconomic group. It tends to be more diverse. But it's so rich. There's so much going on over here. That's something I've learned through UP. I'd like to hope that people will talk about it in a more enriching way.

In this quote, the participant started by with alluding to west side deficits, then shifted ("But it's so rich") and stressed the richness of the west side. They noted that UP has taught them to talk in more enriching ways. This example shows that this UP participant was willing to learn how to avoid deficit discourse, and was self-monitoring in order to instantiate a new pattern. Speaking about cultural wealth was an important shift for UP participants, and they normalized and sanctioned this characterization to create change. In the next section, I move on the second desired discourse: integration.

Integration

Another way that participants wanted to overcome the contradiction of deficit discourses was to characterize the west side as integral to the city and the university. Participants believed that current deficit patterns framed the west side as separate, as in, "I think the west side has that negative connotation to it that is hard for people to even get past because there's such a strong west side, east side mentality." Buendia et al. (2004) argued that historically deficit notions about the west side have been naturalized, and that "west side" and "east side" codes are used to refer to race and class distinctions in less politically charged ways. This also demonstrates Valencia's (1997) argument that deficit discourses are perpetuated in new forms over time, in this case in the form of spatial east/west codes.

UP participants challenged this separation and attempted to change this pattern by talking about the west side as integrated into the city at large. This would resolve the quaternary contradiction of deficit discourse by shifting the goal of activity from [a deficit community in need of help] to [a part of the university that cannot be fractured apart to view as other]. A part of UP's mission statement is "*a community coming*

together," which they italicize and emphasize. The "community" of this mission statement is singular and in the process of "coming together." Talk of coming together indicates the existing separation that has negative connotations, which was also seen in the discussion of connection featured in Chapter Four. Several participants discussed the desire to come together. For example, "I want to see the gap between east side and west side bridged. There's no separation. We can be one community, not like separate communities." Another participant challenged "here" and "there" separations, saying that people in the university system often discussed deficits by spatial markers such as, "'It happens over there.' As opposed to being like, 'That happens here.' I think that's what we do." The participant desired deficits and assets to be acknowledged everywhere, not just on the west side. Here is another example of stressing similarity and integration as opposed to separation:

> I'd like them to talk about that it is a part of the whole. That we are all one community and within this one community every part of the community has different needs and we need to attend to the needs of all aspects our community… Not that community. So the us and them mentality is not what I would want to hear. But the our is what I want to hear. It is part of who we are.

This participant chose integrated language ("the our" and "our community") in order to combat deficit discourses.

This attempt to resolve the quaternary contradiction is complicated because keeping the west side separate allows that community to be labeled as deficit and garner resources. Furthermore, the separation benefits higher socioeconomic status communities because it allows "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) discourse to flourish. As Harter et al. (2005) argue, NIMBY discourses allow residents to deny important social issues, and their responsibility in perpetuating social injustice. When east side or

university members say that the west side has deficits, a spatial marker substitutes for blatant racism or elitism, and those in the university or on the east side can deny responsibility in west side conditions. Accepting responsibility could hurt traditional notions of credibility, or diminish the authoritative resources of those in the university and on the east side. By transforming to speaking in integrated ways, both communities are challenged to take on each other's deficits and assets together and shift to one system instead of antagonistic systems. In the next section, I explain the third way that participants want to change deficit discourse patterns, and instead stress the west side as communities of teachers and students.

Teaching and Learning

The third way that UP participants sought to resolve the contradiction of deficit discourse was by talking about those in the community system as teachers who can educate those who are in the university system. This would resolve the contradiction by promoting the authoritative resources of community members as equal to that of professors on campus with advanced degrees. This desire echoes the structuration of partnership as reciprocal. It also reverses traditional notions of those in the university system as superior producers of knowledge, as one participant discussed:

> I want them to think of [the west side] as people that have really important things to teach, because I want them to take into account their personal experiences. That matters a lot if you ask me. Maybe a person who never went to school, they also have a lot of things to teach. Even though I have a college degree, I don't know about life, about small things, I don't know, regular things that happen every day.

Here, the ability of residents to teach is emphasized several times, and compared to people with college degrees. The participant differentiated between a type of community

system knowledge and a type of university system knowledge. Because deficit discourses often discredit the educability of low socioeconomic historically minoritized students (Valencia, 1997), UP participants desired to challenge and change such discourse by highlighting community members as teachers. One participant explains:

> Academics tend to look at themselves as knowledge producers. You don't have any knowledge in the community first of all, we produce the knowledge, we have the theories, we have the methods, we have - we produce it. What do you do in the community when you apply that knowledge? You don't *learn* from the communities.

The importance of learning from communities, as seen in this quote, is also part of several UP annual reports and publications. For example, in her introduction to the annual report, the director talks about "resident teachers" (Community Voices, 2010). One participant said, "I'd like to see [west side] residents having ownership obviously, but also having them feel comfortable in teaching people what they think is important too." This infers that the reciprocal aspect of teaching may not be where participants desire. Consequently, participants are eager to hear more about resident teachers.

When participants discussed the desire to elevate learning from the community, it was often in respect to the university: "I would like to hear what professors taught and what they learned, 'I am a Professor Emeritus of Communication. I've been doing this for seven years and do you know what, I've learned. I learned from my UP experience.'" This desire involved wanting those with significant resources (professor emeriti) to recognize the community's capacity to teach. Another participant makes a comparison:

> I have had so many learning moments. I probably learned more from the community than I've ever learned in my formal training at the university, and I'm lucky and privileged enough to be able to think about ways to couple those different forms of knowledge.

In this description, the participant stressed the community as a superior teacher to the university, and cited "different forms of knowledge." One participant asserted that they wanted to hear people at the university saying, "The intellectual capacity of our student body is nurtured by students that come from the west side."

In terms of teaching and learning, community leadership was also an important aspect of UP's work and vision. One of their oldest and most successful partnerships was a leadership institute that was taught in both English and Spanish. This year, one of its graduates was elected to the city council and publicly made a speech at a UP event crediting the institute with their election. Participants often stressed these successes:

> The people who live [on the west side] have been important. They have been history makers. They have been political activists. They have been educators. They have been citizens of the state, and as a result are deserving of what a public institution can offer, that citizenship.

In this quote, the leadership qualities of residents were featured in addition to their ability to teach. Here is another example regarding leadership: "I'd like to hear about the leaders here who do the work. I'd like them to be centered in the discussion, not what the University did, but the community and the people who were a part of it." This quote again highlighted the resources of residents, desiring for them to be "centered" as opposed to the university. In these ways, participants believed that when west side residents were characterized as teachers and leaders, deficit discourses could be challenged and the contradiction resolved in favor of a more reciprocal vision of education that places importance in the public good. In the next section, I discuss the second contradiction that created a barrier to change at the university, and how participants wanted to overcome this contradiction through more desired alternatives.

The Marginalization of Community Based Research (CBR)

Explanation of CBR

When attempting to change the university system, UP participants wanted to feature partnerships in terms of "community based research," (CBR), and promote faculty involvement and publications in CBR. However, although research was an important goal of the university, participants felt that CBR was often marginalized in the academy. In this section, I discuss the contradictory aspects of CBR and then explain how participants developed alternatives to resolve these contradictions with desired new discourses that promote CBR.

Participants used CBR as an umbrella term to refer to research happening in UP partnerships, this is often interdisciplinary research efforts that engaged community issues and community stakeholders. CBR and community engagement in general were seen as transformational ways to keep the public good central to public education. One way to understand how UP envisions CBR is to refer to their participation in a community based research grant program. UP and the Vice President for Research sponsored the program. Here are the five qualifications a faculty member had to meet in 2011 in order to apply for the singular $20,000 grant:

> 1. Demonstrate significant scholarly merit, leading to publication in scholarly journals or similar venues, and/or demonstrate significant potential to lead to extramural funding.
>
> 2. Demonstrate an on-going collaboration between researcher and community partner(s). This funding is not intended to initiate partnerships, but to promote scholarship and dissemination of knowledge from existing partnerships.
>
> 3. Demonstrate strong collaboration with community partners during the research process (e.g. definition of questions, involvement as co-researchers, final research products, dissemination/implementation of findings).

> 4. Provide evidence of reciprocal benefit for residents and/or community partner (s). This includes involving community partners in defining how the research will benefit them (e.g. directing research towards questions/issues important to the partner, creating a research product that is useful to the partner, or aligning the research in other ways with the community partners' goals). Provide examples of other anticipated research products (reports, data, documentaries, websites, program evaluations, public discussion, etc.) and how they will benefit the community partner(s).
>
> 5. Build or strengthen cross-disciplinary research partnerships within the university and/or community. (CBR grant requirements, 2011)

In these requirements, the language of collaboration and reciprocal benefit is repeated, and although methodology is not specified, it is required that community partners help define the research. For example, one participant told me, "I would like to see more of the community working with research, that community members might be involved with that kind of research, doing the same research. That UP and the university are involved at the same time." Again, this pointed to greater involvement of community members simultaneously with university members.

UP participants were hesitant to offer specific CBR guidelines, yet collaboration and cocreation were repeated as general guidelines. Here is how one participant reacted to the idea of a UP model:

> What makes our work strong and actually useful and powerful is complexity and you can't disseminate complexity, right? If we wanted to disseminate our model and we would be quantitative researchers or even in some cases, qualitative researchers and follow a strict regimen of methods and that sort of stuff… That's not who we are. The research and the knowledge that is created and co-created here is not about that. So, I would hate for us to have a focus or even a small part of what we do be about sharing our model. It's so colonizing, I feel.

This participant discussed general interdisciplinary approach, in that CBR was not specific in terms of "a strict regimen of methods," but rather "co-created here." A few people told me about doing CBR "right," such as several educational partnerships and

Hopeland. I also heard several stories of "CBR gone wrong," and they all involved university researchers not collaborating with the community. One example was a dialogue effort where university professors wanted to sit down and talk to community members, which failed because community members were not interested in that activity. Another example was a social work professor who wanted to study mental illness as a result of refugee experiences, and the local refugee population did not identify with having mental illnesses. In the latter case, the social work professor worked with refugee groups to determine a more collaborative purpose to the study that was not deficit based. The new study highlighted the strength in refugee families to cope with traumatic events.

By promoting CBR as an important form of research, UP faced a tertiary contradiction because CBR introduces a completely different way of viewing academic research (H. E. Canary, 2010b). Tertiary contradictions introduce advanced motives into an activity, creating a completely different view of the object of the activity (H. E. Canary, 2010b). As I discussed in Chapter Three's review of engaged research innovations, traditional ways of doing academic research privilege the academic development of research designs and processes. CBR meant that an advanced motive (community involvement) was introduced into the activity of academic research, creating a starkly different view of the object of research (community driven vs. academically driven), and subsequently caused tension and contradiction. This motive threatened the authoritative resources of those in the university system.

UP participants felt that university patterns and resources served to create a barrier through university patterns and practices that functioned to frame CBR as an unappealing choice. The pattern of discussing CBR as an unappealing choice then

directed faculty back to research that took more traditional forms. Most often, these university patterns that marginalized CBR concerned the difficulty of the work, and the lack of resources for such work. CBR was discussed as difficult much like partnership was structured as difficult. Several participants discussed the unpredictability of the work, such as, "It's not so clear cut right? I'll just go objectively study my specimens in my field and I'll come back and write it up…" This quote referred to a more "traditional" research practice of the university that was linear and relatively more predictable than CBR. Here is another description:

> When you have true participatory action, whether it's in research or a program that might lead to research but isn't research based, you have to be able to totally separate yourself from intended outcomes. You have to be able to let things go. And I don't think that universities have an easy time with that. The value for a community on a given issue might be seeing something grind to a halt and not make any progress whatsoever. And it's very unlikely that that is a value to a university researcher.

In this quote, the participant found value in relinquishing control of a research project, which would not be easy for university researchers. Other aspects of CBR that participants felt were difficult for researchers were the personal investment ("Once you're involved, how would you go away?"), time ("It's seen as extra work", "an elective or something you can do in your spare time"), and lack of legitimacy ("Oh that little community thing you're doing," "CBR needs so badly to rename itself and identify itself as special").

While participants felt that CBR had a reputation for being difficult, they also felt that it was publicly encouraged and not professionally rewarded. In other words, although external communication served to structure the research as valuable, internal reward and resource systems served to structure the research as prohibitive. This was

another clash of community and university signification and legitimation structures. One participant simply said, “It’s not seen as important in the whole system. And people will tell you that over and over again.” Another participant portrayed the situation in terms of oppression: “People have an inferiority complex because of an oppressive system that doesn’t value [CBR] always.” Here is another example:

> You've got to have an individual reward system that says working with UP and engaging in community scholarship, engaging with the community is valued. And I think in some cases that's not true within the way the retention, promotion, tenure guidelines for departments work.

As seen in this quote, many participants wanted CBR to have more impact in retention, tenure, and promotion processes. In other words, those who do CBR would gain credibility and resources as opposed to engaging in difficult work that would not proportionally be rewarded. During this case, participants felt that the university needed to make changes in order to promote CBR as a viable choice for faculty who need to gain tenure. Here is one participant’s explanation:

> Not everybody's coming from the same place, and there's an old history of what's considered knowledge and this is considered softer service. It's not considered - the journal articles, the journals that you could publish in aren't going to receive as many stars as the other journals. Which means that professor may not get tenure. So we need to help people. We need to change the system that this is valuable, and being able to provide more opportunities for faculty to publish at a level that is deemed credible at the same time that we educate the system of why this is credible.

This quote references the intended shift from “old history” to “change the system” by elevating the status of CBR publications and helping people get tenure.

During the time that I worked with UP, several important faculty members left the university. Among participants, there was a perception that these faculty left because they had trouble getting tenure due to their involvement in community based work which

did not lead to high profile publications. A participant characterized the situation this way:

> Some faculty will continue to do this work because they're passionate about it and they're creative enough to tie it into the work that they're doing. But we have lost faculty, not just us, the university has, because the work they're doing isn't being published in the right journals. In the department, the bottom line is in evaluating the community work. Three faculty in the last year. Cutting edge. Best faculty I've ever worked with. Gone.

This quote showed that the current situation was not encouraging to partnership work, and that the current evaluation strategies in departments were not encouraging to CBR even though there were grant programs and administrator's messages that promoted the work as important. Therefore, in order to resolve this tertiary contradiction in favor of changing these aspects of the university system, participants worked toward communicating about CBR in different ways. In the next sections, I show how participants attempted to overcome this contradiction through two desired new discourses they believed could lead to systemic transformation.

Desired New Discourses to Promote CBR

CBR is Scholarly

In order to resolve the contradiction of the marginalization of CBR and instead promote CBR, UP participants discussed a few new desired discourses. Since the practice of CBR was often structured by university members as difficult or as something you do in your spare time, participants wanted to change the conversation to focus on the characterization of CBR as academic and scholarly. This would reframe the conversation to positive attributes and resources of the research. For example, one participant said that UP does, "…a lot of research in the west side, and that is changing the university," and

"It's valuable from an academic standpoint." These patterns focused on the transformational potential of UP and its academic value.

Many UP participants attended university meetings for community scholarship, and worked together to promote CBR. Some UP participants worked together to create a group of faculty who would serve as peer review for one another and elevate the visibility of their scholarship. UP also worked at creating lists of published articles that were linked to many of their partnerships. This list was promoted on their website, and used as leverage to create a CBR grant that was offered through the university. In these ways, UP participants made attempts to change the conversation about CBR and elevate its scholarly status. The CBR grant was also an important step in directing resources toward this scholarship.

Participants also recognized that academic value is closely tied to publications, so part of their desired conversations included publishing CBR and talking about it as viable in terms of publication opportunities. The compilation of CBR scholarship bibliographies highlighted the importance of publishing and illuminated how publications enhanced faculty members authoritative resources. One participant said, "I would like to see more research that can get published so the word can get out that faculty are more valued in this environment, so that the community-based research piece is seen as scholarly." Another participant agreed, saying that, "Supporting or somehow seeing to it that research is getting done and then research is getting published would show that research happens here."

Another way to emphasize CBR's academic value and promote the practice was to frame it as a legitimate form of research, not marginalized but on par with other research traditions. Here, a participant discusses the legitimacy issue:

> There has to be avenues to support that as legitimate research, right? And so obviously scholars have written about that. It's just a matter of the university understanding that research can exist in multiple forms, that it's not just about the methodology but, it's about the positioning, it's about the experience and how that increases our knowledge base.

In this quote, in addition to mentioning legitimacy, the participant also referenced a scholarly debate about the issue, "obviously scholars have written about that," invoking larger disciplinary debates. This implied again that CBR is described as legitimate in academic conversations in journals, but that talk has not significantly taken root in this particular university system, enough to where it is commonplace. Another participant talks about promoting CBR as not just legitimate, but a highlight of the university:

> I'd like to see more community-based research published in official journals or official research journals. I know that's not university specific but, it's academic specific. Or, community based research highlighted by the university, more so than the fact that the brain institute has done this MRI something.

In this quote, the participant felt that research done at the "brain institute" often received attention instead of CBR. At a recent UP event, I heard several other comments about the publicized work of the medical school. One participant told me that in order to promote CBR, "I think top down encouragement would help, more notoriety throughout the campus." UP participants desired positive attention for their research that would enhance their credibility, and wanted CBR to be described in the university system as scholarly and exemplary. Although all faculty are theoretically free to do CBR, participants believed that praise would encourage the practice.

CBR is Professionally Rewarded

As I mentioned earlier, in order to promote CBR, participants also wanted it to be professionally rewarded in faculty retention, tenure, and promotion processes. During this research, participants expressed suspicion that this type of research was not being rewarded. Again, several UP faculty members left the university, and there was a perception among others that it was due to problems in getting tenure. I heard these rumors from both those involved with UP and other university members who were not involved in the organization. One participant stated, "In order to gauge excellence of a faculty member as a scholar, you have to do that by measure of publications, research grants, prominence internationally, national prominence, and so forth. Community scholarship typically doesn't get you there." UP participants realized that if CBR was discussed as a deterrent to gaining tenure, it could thwart involvement with the organization and with partnerships. By contrast, promoting CBR and connecting it to tenure could help attract more involvement.

Participants desired to hear and know that CBR was professionally rewarded by tenure, and also other academic rewards and resources. In regards to CBR and tenure, one comment envisioned this change in tenure, or the "academic reward system":

> The academic reward system would be another way so that UP's able to represent the importance of providing opportunities for faculty to apply their scholarship of community engagement with a hope of building that into a campus wide process.

This quote envisioned scholarship of community engagement in the academic reward system, recognized campus wide. Another similar dream was, "I'd like to see the tenure system change, which you know is really lofty, but more credibility given to community based research and community building projects." This referred to the desire to hear talk

that enhanced the credibility and legitimacy of CBR in the university system. This talk alluded to this structural contradiction leading to generative resolution in terms of changes in tenure policies. H.E. Canary (2010a) argues that policies are important in structuration, because they structure time and space and also have a significant influence on employees' actions. UP participants were interested in effecting policy and changing it in a generative way to value CBR.

Two colleges, Education and Social Work, were often mentioned as models of success in working toward changing reward systems. In the college of Education, UP faculty members advocated for the inclusion of community engagement in their latest "five-year college action plan." This move supported the idea of growing UP's work by having faculty advocates. Several participants in the College of Social Work also felt that a gradual shift was happening there (they do not have departments), and they were anticipating changes to the retention, promotion, and tenure policies. The UP Director and Assistant Director hold Ph.D.s in Social Work, and several people mentioned that the organization was a good fit with the college. At one event, the UP director discussed impending changes in Social Work as a critical first step, because other departments and colleges might follow their lead. These initial successes were seen as crucial to creating momentum toward resolving this contradiction in favor of generative change.

While tenure was mentioned specifically, other rewards were also mentioned, such as simple acknowledgement along the lines of this participant's vision:

> The University could do some very clear things to say, "Hey, this work is important. If you do this work, you will be acknowledged. It will hold the test of time. You can do good work in this community. It's not just extra work that you're doing."

This vision involved praise for important work, the promise of acknowledgement, and the reassurance that CBR is not creating an additional workload for a faculty member. Similarly, another participant discussed the promise of rewards or resources by offering this suggestion to the university:

> Changing the way they look at merit and merit based systems and what is merit. All of that piece needs to change, and I do think there needs to be more resources available for faculty to do this type of work, currently the onus is on faculty, which is true of any research, but to go out and find their own funding to do this type of work.

This suggestion involved both changing the way merit is characterized, and also offering faculty more resources in order to do CBR.

In the next section, I discuss the third contradiction that participants discussed as a barrier to creating changes to university structures and several more desired new discourses before concluding this chapter.

The Containment of UP

Explanation of Growth

The final contradiction, or barrier that UP participants discussed, was the desire to grow the work and influence of the organization. In this contradiction, participants believed that, while the university encouraged partnership, it also served to contain partnership to the geographic areas targeted in the formation of UP. In this section, I discuss the reasons why growth was important, and then I discuss the ways that participants wanted to communicatively build the case to encourage such growth.

Some participants spoke in generalities about growing UP's work and influence. When asked about their best possible visions for UP's future, one participant responded, "The best possible? Obviously to be able to grow." Other responses included: "More of

now. More of what we do now," and "There would need to be more partnerships for sure." However, although many participants spoke generally of growth, others specified the desire to grow the organization beyond its imposed limits of the west side.

In 2011, the organization celebrated its tenth anniversary, and reflected on how the organization set its focus ten years ago as a set of zip codes. Many wanted that focus to enlarge. One participant described their dream for the organization's expansion:

> My dream for UP would be that it blossoms into an organization like that: community educational partnerships, which re-centers its emphasis on education, but maintains partnership with the community as a framework. And that it expands beyond this notion of west side only. I think community educational partnerships provides an opportunity for us to, for the institution, to have a presence in many historically marginalized communities around the state, not just here in the west side.

In this characterization, the organization blossomed and expanded beyond "this notion of west side only," so that UP was "not just here in the west side." This was important to others as well: "If it could expand to other sides of the city, that would be great." Another participant's view of the organization's future was:

> I think it would look like we look now but a lot bigger. Able to work in more communities because I don't think it's fair in any way, shape, or form, that we are limited to the neighborhoods that we're limited to.

This again showed resistance to being "limited" by the university to neighborhood designations. Many viewed the west side only limits as social constructions, and were willing to work with anyone in partnerships regardless of their residency. Once, a participant joked with me that I shouldn't ask about any type of residency because it could make incoming populations nervous. Instead, several partnerships worked with anyone that wanted to collaborate.

This desire to grow beyond the west side and move toward more integration of systems conflicted with the university's current conceptualization of the UP community. Therefore, the containment of UP was a tertiary contradiction because *growing* UP called for the university to engage in a completely new way of viewing the goal of the organization and its activities. Allowing UP to grow would require the university system to change because UP cannot expand within their current configuration and resource allocations. To allow growth, the university would not only have to change their conception of UP as based on particular zip codes and enrollment levels, but would have to provide more resources in the forms of extra staff and funding related to how large the organization could become. This would mean that the university would no longer adequately orient to the goal of UP, and would need to transform its existing system resources and practices (H. E. Canary, 2010b).

Expansion of UP would not only require transformation of existing system resources and practices, it would also exacerbate the contradictions around CBR. In expanding UP, the university would need to encourage more faculty involvement in partnerships and in CBR. As I discussed in the previous section, CBR is currently marginalized as a research practice, and university faculty are informally encouraged to choose more traditional research practices and publications. Therefore, the contradiction around the containment of UP is related to the contradiction around CBR, and growth of UP would enhance this issue and create more tension.

Growing the organization would require more resources, in particular scarce financial resources such as money and staff. Participants often expressed the desire to grow resources, often dramatically. A few examples include: "I would say we need a lot

more money. I think we should have twice the budget that we do, for starters," and, "In general, we would increase our capacity which for me means we would have more partners, more funding, a larger staff to do more things," and "I'd like to see them be bigger, to see them have more support from the U, whether that be funding or staff or just more resources to provide those partnerships," and "The scholarship and budgets and financial things are the big things that I can see will make UP better able to serve the community in the next ten years." One participant expressed this desire for resource growth by stating:

> If it's going to grow and expand I think there has to be dollars attached to it by the U. Significant, like twice as many people, not like one more position, because I feel like the programs and the needs for programs are growing exponentially.

In all these comments, the desire to grow resources was common. Participants wanted more money (from the university), more staff for the organization, and more financial support for students and partnerships.

Although most participants desired significant resource growth, they acknowledged that UP was not easily going to achieve this goal. In order to attract more resources, participants discussed ways to increase the visibility of the organization and its work. In other words, to be able to grow, participants acknowledged that they would have to make the case that UP could be seen as an authoritative resource in the university system. They believed that elevating the status of UP and enhancing its position in the university system, or enhancing its credibility, would lead to the university allocating even more resources. There were two main ways that participants wanted to change the conversation about UP in order to accomplish growth. In the next sections, I will explore these two desired new discourses.

Desired New Discourses to Grow UP

UP and Departments

In order to resolve the tertiary contradiction of the containment of UP, and to grow UP's work and influence, participants wanted transform the university system to have more university departments involved. Therefore, they wanted to hear discursive patterns and practices that signified that UP was in many departments and important to departments. For many, the key to growing UP was to get more departments involved and steadily grow that number. As one participant simply said, "It wouldn't hurt to have more departments involved." Another said, "I would like to see more departments actively involved in the partnership and in the community." Another said that UP should go to departments and advocate: "It seems incumbent upon UP to go through the different schools and departments and try to make what connections they can with the community." In these quotes, the participants believed that recruiting more departments in partnerships would be able to help grow the work and influence of UP.

Participants varied in the strategies they felt should be used to approach departments. This participant described a strategy that was gradual:

> They need to think about which other departments at the University should they strategically try to involve rather than tackling the whole University at once. Maybe pick a couple of departments to get some things involved, because the University is a great big place.

This strategy echoed some of the early successes of UP in Education and Social Work, which were strategic choices because of the involvement of west side schools in university recruitment, and west side nonprofits in what UP participants viewed as crucial in addressing systemic community issues. Education and Social Work were frequently lauded for their successes. However, while the above participant felt that picking "a

couple of departments" was the ideal way to grow UP, another participant advocated for a more holistic approach: "A decree that says 'This is important to us and this is how we do this stuff and every department needs to make sure there's someone committed to these efforts.'" This suggestion involved a "decree," and argued for involvement from every department, creating policy that enhanced the legitimation of partnership.

Several participants discussed that faculty members could help UP grow into more departments. Again, these suggestions were also based on historical successes of particular UP faculty members, such as several UP icons in Education and Social Work. One participant said that an important future focus for UP should be, "The daily work of working with faculty to help them work within their departments to envision how the work can be a long term part of what is happening and contribute to what's important." This statement followed the logic that faculty who become involved could then work within their own departments and grow the work of the organization. This type of strategy would capitalize on faculty's local knowledge of their department's particular system resources and practices. This inside system knowledge could be leveraged in order to find local ways to insinuate UP activities in departmental trends.

Similarly, this participant described a strategy for growth that included faculty: "A clear, humbled, strong understanding of what the departmental mission is and being able to talk about how this work feeds that mission and takes it to the next level. Faculty have done that, and it works." In this way, if faculty were able to align their department's mission with UP's work, they could argue for how UP "feeds that mission and takes it to the next level." Thus, faculty could grow the organization's work and influence through advocacy in their departments. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, both Education and

Social Work were seen as exemplary in this type of process. This move would go beyond insinuating UP activities in departmental trends to incorporating UP in departmental policy and procedures, which would add greater legitimacy to the organization.

UP and Administration

A second way that participants desired change, and wanted to grow the work and influence of UP, was to hear from upper administration that the work was important. Participants desired to hear that UP was a priority for upper administration in many forms. In this quote, the participant goes through a list:

> If we want all the faculty to work with us, we need to talk with every college. The dean, the program, the college, department chairs, talk with department chairs and deans and go present there at the college about the university and the work we are doing, taking residents and presenting at the university.

This vision included a great deal of advocacy with administration, and envisioned the arguments being made by UP participants including residents. I attended one such meeting where the UP director met with a diversity committee in the university's human resource department. The director also brought a community resident (who was also an advisory board member. In that meeting, the committee wanted to work with UP to access potential employees from UP communities, and the UP director and advisory board member also argued that reciprocal benefit would need to be involved, such as bilingual job boards and local recruiting.

Other UP participants were more specific about administration, and discussed upper administration up to the president, as in "I'd like to see the president more involved in west side communities." Although UP is part of the Office of the President, as

discussed in Chapter Four, participants desired even greater involvement from the president. For many, the president was a crucial connection to resources: "Who doles out the money? Vice Presidents and the President." Therefore, the president's involvement was important to UP participants' desire for growth, and some saw it as a catalyst:

> For that kind of change to happen that's systemic and the kind of change that I'm discussing about faculty changing like that, it's got to happen really high up, like President level, Vice-President level, Faculty Senate level, because we have faculty who want to do this work.

This participant discussed that systemic change happened "really high up," and that despite faculty interest in the work, those higher up would need to catalyze change. Therefore, those in upper administration would need to value and promote UP in order to create systemic change and grow the work and influence of the organization. I also witnessed UP staff developing good relationships with administration, and developing a good reputation with important opinion leaders such as the Associate Vice President for Equity and Diversity.

Participants also frequently mentioned deans as important advocates. They felt that deans would have the power to create change and help to grow UP's work and influence:

> If deans understand that that is part and parcel of the success of faculty members, UP can help provide that. I think deans will be much more interested in learning about UP and creating opportunities to support faculty engagement through UP.

This participant explained a change process where UP educated the deans about how faculty work with UP led to success, and then deans would create more "opportunities to support faculty engagement." However, a few participants expressed concern about advocating to deans, because they might not understand UP or even know about it. One said, "Deans are going to have a hard time understanding the full breadth of UP's work,"

and another said, "Deans or people high up might be more supportive if UP had more visibility." These statements illustrated that the visibility of the organization was not as strong as desired, and that the work of the organization was not easily understandable, harkening back to Chapter Four's discussion of the enabling and constraining features of *Confusion.*

Overall, although participants mentioned several types of upper administration including the president, vice-president, and deans, there was not significant agreement about how to approach administrators at the university. Participants were not in agreement over the specific system practices and resources that needed to be transformed in order to overcome this contradiction. In general, the desire among participants was to simply hear from such offices that the work of UP was important. In order to grow the work and influence of the organization, participants understood the value of the support and advocacy of upper administration. However, as one participant said:

> I don't know how you get an administration to come up with a brilliant idea that says, "Wow. We need to be more systematic about UP," without the people at UP's bodies being on the line. That's the concern, because I want to be very clear that it's not all UP's problem.

Here, the participant expressed frustration about working with administration and promoting UP. While UP participants desired change and desired new discourses, this quote also addressed the issue that onus should not always be on the organization, especially in resource rich realms such as administration.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I addressed the second and final research question of this study. My analysis explained three main contradictions encountered by UP participants when

attempting to create change in the university system. The first contradiction, *Deficit Discourses,* explained the structural contradictions and quaternary contradiction over deficit discourses, and offered several desired new discourses in order to resolve this contradiction in favor of change. The three new desired discourses I discussed included cultural wealth, integration, and teaching and learning. These new discursive patterns encouraged focus on community assets, and participants believed that they could lead to transformation in the university system.

Following a similar pattern, I introduced the second contradiction: *The Marginalization of Community Based Research (CBR).* Within the discussion of this contradiction was an explanation of CBR and why it needed promotion. In order to be successful in the attempt to resolve this tertiary contradiction toward change, participants desired new discourses that positioned CBR as scholarly, and also as professionally rewarded. Participants believed that talking about the academic rigor of CBR and its relevance to publication, as well as talking about how CBR could lead to success in tenure decisions could lead to greater interest in partnership and CBR. This interest could help to change the university system.

Finally, I discussed the third contradiction encountered as participants tried to change the system of the university: *The Containment of UP.* This section was different, because instead of the pattern of avoid-replace that the first two proposed resolutions followed, the attempt to resolve this tertiary contradiction instead sought to grow what already existed. In short, this attempt desired change through expansion. UP participants wanted to hear more about how important the organization was to departments at the university. They also wanted to hear more about how the organization was important to

upper administration at the university. The desired pairing of UP with departments and upper administration was seen as a critical way to grow the organization's ability to garner resources, and also grow its work and influence.

This chapter concludes the analysis portion of the dissertation, and in the next chapter, I offer a review of this research as a whole. I return to the curiosities and questions that prompted this research, and revisit the theoretical lenses. Reviewing the analysis chapters, I synthesize my findings in order to offer both theoretical and practical implications. I also discuss the strengths and weaknesses of my methodological approach, and offer suggestions concerning the *engaged advisor* approach. Finally, I conclude the research as a whole and reflect on possible research extensions and new opportunities.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

On January 10, 2012, the White House convened the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement to issue a report entitled "A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future." The report addresses the key issues that also motivated this dissertation. It argues that higher education in the United States should teach principles of democratic engagement and citizenry as opposed to only workforce preparation. Those involved with higher education negotiate tensions between democratic education and the desires of the market every day. Several important initiatives are working to keep the public good in public higher education central. In this research, I focused on one type of initiative, "campus-community partnerships," which are based on a tradition of community engagement and community based research. This dissertation was a critical case study of UPartner (UP), an organization that worked to create and sustain campus-community partnerships at a large western public university.

In this final chapter, I briefly return to the genesis of this case study and the specific research questions that guided the research in order to provide a general review of the entire project. I offer a synthesis of the structuration of UP's activities, and the contradictions UP encountered in their attempts to change. I review how participants planned to resolve these contradictions through several desired new discourses. Then, I

return to the proposed extensions of structuration theory that I foregrounded in the beginning of this study, and explain how this research addressed those opportunities. Furthermore, I address the strengths and limitations of the methodology, and the *engaged advisor* approach to this case study. Finally, I offer descriptive advice to UP that may have transferable value to organizations working in similar ways at other public universities. I close the chapter with a discussion of the limitations and future opportunities of my findings, and a brief personal reflection.

The Structuration of UP's Activities

In Chapter Four, I described four main discursive patterns and practices of UP participants in regard to their organization's activities: *Connection, Hopeland, Confusion,* and *Not Service/Outreach.* Then, in Chapter Five, I described three discursive patterns and practices of their central activity of partnership: *Reciprocity, Sustainability,* and *Difficulty.* In both of these chapters, I explained these patterns with examples from the data, and showed how participants reproduced patterns and made resource distinctions between the systems of the university/campus and community. I also discussed how each pattern could be simultaneously enabling and constraining to the organization. Adding another layer to the analysis, I discussed the structural properties of democratic and market discourse that could be seen informing participants everyday accounts.

To synthesize these findings, I offer a schema that suggests movement in and among the themes. I combined the themes of Chapters Five and Six, and argue that some discursive patterns were easily reproduced ("Effective Patterns and Practices") while others were not as successful ("Problematic Patterns and Practices"). My judgment of effective/problematic is based on the consistent repetition of patterns and affect

accompanying them, and is also based on how closely that pattern aligns, broadly speaking, with UP's organizational goals.

Giddens (1984) argues that all structures are in a state of flux, and only endure in memory traces and through repetition. Therefore, in this synthesis, I do not mean to suggest that any pattern in the structuration process is permanent, or should be reproduced blindly into the future. Rather, I argue that when UP members reproduced some patterns, they caused less tension and served organizational goals more than others. In terms of structuration, the "effective" patterns created ontological security, whereas the "problematic" patterns reproduced insecurity. Furthermore, unlike the problematic patterns, the effective patterns did not appear to point to contradictions in or between systems, but rather facilitated organizational goals.

Effective Patterns and Practices

There were several patterns that structured the activities of UP and that appeared to be working for UP participants because they were often reproduced, and often accompanied by positive attributions implying ontological security. In *Connection,* participants discussed how UP connected community and university, and also connected participants to resources such as social services, university resources, and community resources. Participants discussed UP as a powerful organization because of its connecting ability, and believed in these connecting abilities so much that they wanted to stretch UP's boundaries of involvement. Although this showed a point of tension about boundaries that I revisited later in the analysis, it also indicated an ontological security that *Connection* was helping the organization to grow its influence and make cases for more funding. Repeatedly, I was told that UP should begin connecting even more

communities to the university and vice versa. In these ways, *Connection* showed that the organization was making significant progress, and also showed that the organization was interested in strengthening community capacity. *Connection* revealed that, while the community benefitted from access to the university, the university was also benefitting from access to cultural wealth, community teaching and learning, and the chance to combat historical ivory tower metaphors.

As an important feature of this pattern, participants drew on the resource of The Office of the President, and discussed how their organization's placement was beneficial. This showed that the symbolic ties to the highest office on campus gave UP more leverage in its work, although it did not entirely eradicate concern about the president's commitment to the organization. Because my research took place during a presidential transition, I was able to see that the resource of The Office of the President was crucial to UP's change efforts. Repeating the connection to this resource worked on many levels to increase the security of UP participants and strengthen the organization's work. This resource in particular will be beneficial for making the case for future funding, visibility, and growth of the organization and of community based research.

The next pattern that reproduced security for UP was *Reciprocity*, and participants discussed reciprocity in three ways. They discussed an idealized type of reciprocity that was the best possible version of partnership, and sometimes used partnerships like Hopeland to embody this ideal form. Participants also discussed relational reciprocity, constructing partnership as personal and choosing not to discuss organizational elements of the process. Finally, reciprocity in contrast made significant distinctions between the resources of university and community systems. Participants constructed the university

as having more resources and a history of misuse of power. Due to this, many participants viewed reciprocity as difficult when this powerful university system was partnered with historically minoritized communities.

Although I offered some caveats to *Reciprocity*, it worked for UP on several levels, was frequently discussed with positive affect, and gave participants ontological security. This was one of the most important aspects of partnership in its repetition and reproduction. *Reciprocity* reproduced several beneficial structural properties of democracy in the United States. U.S. democracy is seen as vulnerable to corporate interest much like public higher education. Democracy in the U.S. also has a history of struggling with reciprocity in representation in many branches of government, and this struggle was important for UP participants. Ideal reciprocity, although possibly daunting, can make a great case for funding as well as advocacy and promotion of community based research. Explaining successes such as Hopeland can be exciting for new participants and donors, who often make contributions to strength as opposed to weakness (Zimmerman, 2011). Ideal reciprocity highlights the organization's strengths and has attracted media attention and resources. Reciprocity in contrast can also make a good case for funding, advocacy, and promotion if successfully balanced so as not to cause a defensive reaction. For example, contrasting historical practices can make a case for better future practices as opposed to contrasting the current administration. In these ways, *Reciprocity* was working on many levels to serve the interests and goals of UP.

The next pattern in transition was *Sustainability,* which involved talk of partnership as long term and committed. Participants argued that partnerships needed to perpetuate over space and time to be optimal. Participants put pressure on the university

to allocate resources in order to achieve sustainability, understanding that sustainability was a way for the university to allocate initial funding, and then withdraw financial support as a partnership became sustainable. In the U.S., there are current debates over sustainable development in other countries that might be dangerously echoed in *Sustainability*. Consider the comparison of the U.S. acting as a democratic "savior" in world politics and UP acting in a similar way locally. In both cases, critics have questioned whether or not international or local populations need help. To UP's credit, only two participants expressed this level of criticism and concern about UP and the concerns expressed were more of a warning than an alarm. And, participants noted that both systems wanted sustainability because, although campus and community work collaboratively, both systems also want to achieve a measure of self-reliance.

Sustainability is enabling to achieving funding goals because it is an important facet and "buzzword" in nonprofit practice. Grant applications currently favor talk of sustainability and often require evidence that nonprofit organizations are working toward sustainable outcomes. Donors appreciate, desire, and give resources to sustainable initiatives. Faculty could also be attracted to sustainable programs because they offer long-term research opportunities and stability. Hopeland is a good example of a sustainable initiative at UP that has had success getting further resources and becoming notable on campus.

Problematic Patterns and Practices

While several patterns were effective for UP, several others were causing ontological *in*security, and creating tensions among participants. Because of the negative affect and nonverbal communication often associated with the reproduction of these

discursive patterns and practices, and because they did not appear to match UP's organizational goals, I consider them to be problematic themes that participants can target for transformation or adjustment. These themes could also be considered problematic because they point to larger contradictions. In this section, I consider the patterns of *Confusion, Not Service/Outreach,* and *Difficulty.* Through the repetition of these discourses, participants expressed and reproduced frustration and worry over larger contradictory circumstances, and the repetition of such frustration could be counterproductive to the goals of UP.

First, in *Confusion,* participants discussed how UP was difficult to understand. There were frequent comparisons between those who did and those who did not "get it." Many participants discussed how people, particularly in the university system, may not "get" UP. UP staff was also concerned with this confusion, and created an ambassadors program to educate people in the university system about the organization. *Confusion* is interesting because it shows the unintended consequences of innovation and novelty. When potential participants encountered a new type of organization like UP, they attempted to classify it as similar to other types of organizations (such as service or outreach). However, service and outreach characterizations were both sanctioned and discouraged by UP. Therefore, when new participants are unable to fit the organization into a familiar structure, and are sanctioned against several alternatives, they can become confused. Then, confusion becomes the new habitual characterization since a more resonant alternative is not readily available.

Participants desired a succinct way to accurately represent UP where they could be successful and not sanctioned. However, explaining the organization often proved a

difficult exercise. Even staff members had a difficult time explaining the organization to me. As I discussed in the potentially enabling qualities of *Confusion*, this could be intentional, where UP benefits from strategic ambiguity (Eisenberg, 1984). In other words, the organization may want to choose complexity over simplicity. Yet, in terms of structuration theory, this habitual repetition of confusion is what will become naturalized over time, and could thwart UP's efforts.

While Canary (2010b) has argued that expressing confusion can be a generative way to seek information, a problematic feature of the *Confusion* in this study was how those in the university system were most often characterized as not "getting it." UP participants often criticized those in the university system, such as UP participants that were important employees of the university themselves. This criticism and sarcasm was often accompanied by affect such as frustration and anger and pointed to larger contradictions in the university system, such as Chapter Six's discussion of deficit discourses and the marginalization of community based research. The confusion could inspire information sharing, but it often inspired resentment – lingering resentment about university-community relationships as well as active resentment.

Talking about the university as confused could be seen as another attempt to resolve the contradiction of deficit discourses by perpetuating a different kind of deficit discourse about the university. While deficit discourses about the community focused on space, social class, race, and educational attainment, discourses about the university focused on elitism, whiteness, and apathy (e.g., "the ivory tower"), and minimized credentials such as advanced degrees. A few participants mentioned the ivory tower specifically, such as: "I just wish they would be more welcoming and inclusive and not

just think that they're in this ivory tower up there." Another participant talked about UP as an island and said:

> The university still remains an ivory tower for the west side. We have this one island on the west side, well maybe these two or three islands now with Hopeland. I think it's just not doing enough to open up the university as far as the climate.

These criticisms showed resentment and disdain for the university and the faculty of the "ivory tower" who did not know what was going on in west side communities. This type of pattern is detrimental to the goals of UP, because if partnership is going to be reciprocal, trust building needs to happen and all types of deficit discourse should be addressed and worked through together.

Another problematic pattern was *Not Service/Outreach,* where UP participants structured their organization as opposed to two other types of organizing. I call this an "oppositional identification" that juxtaposed the organization to two historically important practices that still had significant weight in the university system and in UP communities: service (and service learning) and outreach. Therefore, *Not Service/Outreach* was problematic, because identifying an organization as "not" something else distracts from its positive identification (what it *is*) and ironically works to emphasize what it defends against. In terms of structuration, even in oppositional identification, service and outreach are the terms that are repeated and naturalized. The potential consequences could be that the service learning center and/or service organizations, which are currently allies of UP, may come to resent UP for being cast as a less desirable alternative. This could thwart the organization's efforts to work with those agencies in order to grow in resources and influence. Admittedly, *Not Service/Outreach* showed that UP was consciously trying to avoid market discourse and conflation with

terminology that is often a hallmark of community service or corporate outreach programs. However, this opposition could also potentially thwart the creation of funding relationships with corporations that UP desires.

Not Service/Outreach is also an interesting pattern, and a problematic one, because it points to a larger contradiction within the university system. In the university, there is a service learning center that I discussed, and it has a central location on campus and a staff that is similar in size to UP. The university also has outreach staff and many outreach activities. Therefore, service and outreach and partnership all need to coexist in the university while also competing for resources from the university. In terms of structurating activity theory (SAT) this is a primary contradiction because all three types of engagement can coexist without needing to transform the system, but yet they all create both benefits and costs (H. E. Canary, 2010b). The UP pattern of discrediting activities that are important to other parts of the university system is problematic because, in the current system, the contradiction cannot be resolved. In order to attempt to change the system, UP could explicitly try to compete with or banish service and/or outreach from the university in order to achieve prominence and garner more resources. However, that type of activity would be a radical shift of focus from what participants expressly want.

Difficulty is the third problematic pattern of this study. Participants structured difficultly in partnerships sometimes as difficult conversations, such as those about resources. Furthermore, many participants felt that the constantly changing nature of partnership created difficulty. Doubt about partnership also caused difficulty for participants. Again, the university system was often cast as the source of doubt. This

further illustrated that lingering tensions about historical relationships between the university and communities are still repeated and serve as a barrier to trust and partnership. In reproducing this pattern, participants reproduced insecurities about UP's work and goals.

Talk of *Difficulty* often occurred during my interviews and not publicly. This could be because difficult characterizations may not be appealing to donors or advocates, and do not make the best case for recruitment of more community based scholars. Hiding difficulty could be serving UP's goals, but in problematic ways. The private repetition of *Difficulty* could point to a need for emotional support and dialogue among participants that may be absent in UP, in particular among the staff. Although UP participants were often empathic and supportive to others, I believe they could benefit from social support for each other since partnership involves emotional labor. At all the staff meetings I attended, and all the meetings of the board of directors, discussion of difficulty was infrequent even though so many people expressed this to me one on one. I am sure that talk of difficulty occurred in conversations that I did not observe, and in informal conversations among employees. However, what I suggest is that, since it is an important pattern concerning partnership, and since it involves an organization wide perception of emotional labor, *Difficulty* may warrant a more prominent conversation in larger collaborative meetings.

However, hiding *Difficulty* may operate as a type of respect due to UP's involvement with underrepresented populations. For example, if a staff member is working with refugee populations, he or she may feel that their difficulty or struggle is insignificant compared to that of a refugee, and therefore silence their emotions. When

compared to some UP participants, discussing the emotional labor of partnership could be minimized as "privileged problems." At times, I thought that many UP participants repeated the structure of *Difficulty* privately to me because the interviews were anonymous. There could be risk and consequence in expressing privileged and other types of difficulty. However, I believe there is transformative potential in moving these conversations about difficulty into collaborative spaces where participants can support each other.

Finally, when talking about UP's activities as *Hopeland,* participants conflated UP with one of its most successful partnerships. This showed both an ideal form of partnership, yet also indicated a larger contradiction in the organization. *Hopeland* was beneficial in increasing funding, organizational advocacy, and advocacy of community based research. *Hopeland* also reproduced structural properties of democracy, such as creating opportunities for voice for many new incoming populations. This invoked U.S. history, and solidified the image of the U.S. as a nation of immigrants. However, UP participants were conflicted about how Hopeland could be changing the purpose of UP's activities from a more general advocacy of partnership to Hopeland in particular. In other words, participants may have been expressing fear about a perceived tertiary contradiction, concerned that focus on Hopeland introduced a more complex motive to UP. This contradiction was perceived because UP was directing significant resources to Hopeland over other partnerships. In order to resolve this contradiction, many participants wanted to maintain the status quo and were resentful of Hopeland's rising status.

Hopeland was also the home to many incoming populations, which created tension in historical populations in UP communities such as historical Latino/a populations. At a January 2012 event, which included several Hopeland performances offered by African refugee youth, the new assistant director made a point to note that Latinas/os were the "majority minority" of the west side, referencing a type of hierarchy. At the time of this research and this event, UP was also involved in a capital campaign to raise money for the new Hopeland center. It is possible that this tension will dissipate once the Hopeland capital campaign ends. However, it is notable that the financial situation introduced competition for resources among populations in UP communities which could be problematic to partnership.

Contradictions and Desires

The second research question of this study shifted to focus on institutional change. I organized the final analysis chapter, Chapter Six, into three contradictions that UP participants encountered when trying to change the university system. First, I explained each contradiction in participant's terms, and then in relation to Structurating Activity Theory (SAT), and finally explained how participants attempted to resolve these contradictions through "desired new discourses." In this way, I first showed what participants wanted to change, and then how they planned to communicate differently to create those changes.

The first contradiction was *Deficit Discourses.* UP participants were concerned with deficit discourse, or speaking about what communities lack as opposed to what assets they have. Deficit discourses were described in relation to low socioeconomic historically minoritized populations. Participants discussed the repetition of these

dangerous ways of talking, and how community members could sometimes perpetuate deficit discourses about themselves. However, in order to change these ways of talking, participants desired new discourses. They wanted to hear that UP communities had significant cultural wealth. Also, participants wanted to hear a more integrated way of talking about campus and community systems that would not allow communities to be separated. When communities were unified, deficit discourses would come to bear on all and not just disproportionately on UP communities. Finally, participants wanted community members to be described as important teachers who could educate those in the university system instead of a one-way vision of education where professors hold privileged knowledge that is worth more than community knowledge.

The attempts to manage the contradiction of deficit discourse are important to consider in light of the activities of UP. Although deficit discourses have been theorized as patterns against low socioeconomic status historically minoritized populations, there is a similar type of negative discourse happening in UP regarding descriptions of the university system. In the structures of *Confusion, Not Service/Outreach,* and *Difficulty,* as well as repetition of ivory tower metaphors, UP participants frequently and harshly criticized university faculty and administration as distant, controlling, and elitist. If these patterns continue to be reproduced, it may cause resentment and difficulty in building any admiration and trust from the university that would change deficit discourses. However, the strength of university criticism can also be taken as indication of lingering resentment and pain, and those in the university system could benefit from learning to hear and interpret such criticism as such.

The second contradiction I discussed was *The Marginalization of Community*

Based Research (CBR). CBR necessitates working with communities to shape research interests, questions, and methodologies. Framing UP's work as CBR was an important way to tie into the mission of the public university while also expanding the influence of UP. To resolve the contradiction of marginalizing CBR, the desired new discourses that participants wanted to hear on campus were that CBR is scholarly and that CBR is professionally rewarded. Since CBR is not fully understood by some university departments, and CBR can take time to do properly, participants believed that it deserved more respect and reward. In particular, participants wanted faculty who choose to do CBR to be assured that this type of research would lead to tenure and professional reward.

This attempt to promote CBR is supported by several activities of UP. *Reciprocity* helps to reproduce the benefits of CBR, and create an appealing and attractive type of opportunity for university faculty and administration. Furthermore, *Sustainability* could also benefit CBR by framing it as a long term research opportunity which would attract faculty and funding. However, the repetition of *Difficulty* could set participants up for a struggle in this attempt because participants so often fashioned CBR as unpredictable, frustrating, and emotional. Again, many scholars desire a complex challenge, and as I discussed earlier, I do not advocate keeping difficult conversations hidden. However, this foundation of talking warrants attention if attempts to promote CBR face resistance. For example, as shown by Kirby and Krone (2002), even if policies such as retention, tenure and promotion policies change, if participants continue to reproduce discussion of CBR as not scholarly, not rewarded, and difficult, these discourses will be powerful deterrents to doing the research.

The third and final contradiction that UP participants faced when trying to change the university system was to *The Containment of UP*. Although UP wanted to grow in influence, it was confined to a particular geographical area according to university terms. In order to accomplish growth, participants wanted to hear that UP was important to university departments and also hear that UP was important to administrators. This attempt wanted to move UP into a more prominent place in departments and administration, and participants wanted to hear more praise for community based research resulting from UP partnerships.

Several activities support this attempt, such as *Connection* and *Reciprocity*. The way the participants are currently talking aligns well with attempts to grow UP's work and influence. *Connection* and *Reciprocity* frame the organization's work in beneficial ways, and were serving organizational goals. The resource of The Office of the President also adds significant credibility to the organization, creating a beneficial foundation from which to grow UP's work and influence. However, *Confusion* and *Difficulty* indicate an internal struggle that could create problems in this attempt. If UP participants are not reproducing a clear and productive vision of their organization, then it may be difficult to create momentum among new participants and administration.

Theoretical Opportunities and Key Contributions

Having revisited the findings of this study's three research questions, I return to the theoretical opportunities of this study, and several related contributions that emerged from the research. At the outset, I argued that this study would contribute to structuration theory because of its critical application, its extension of contradictions in structurating activity theory (SAT), its focus on collaborative institutional change efforts, and its

attention to educational institutions as a context. In this section, I elaborate on these opportunities of structuration theory, and a few additional contributions of this research.

The first extension I revisit is my argument that research on structuration theory is not often critical in its application. This study was an opportunity to investigate a problem concerning a critical power imbalance. The study evolved from concerns that market discourse and activity was overtaking the civic and democratic responsibilities of a public university. I aligned with critical scholars who desire to keep the public good central to public universities. Furthermore, I engaged with UPartner, which sought to increase the enrollment of historically underrepresented populations at the university by creating egalitarian campus-community partnerships.

Structuration asserts that all organizational members possess practical consciousness and the ability to make different communication choices. This study showed the potential of participants who organize and attempt to make different communication choices together in order to increase their impact. Because of a history of community oppression, the participants in this study were keenly aware of communication patterns that served to oppress west side communities, and strategically decided how they wanted them to change. Although organizational leaders often guide new choices, this study showed that organizational participants could articulate potential conflicts and have the potential to create meaningful change.

Structuration theory also provided an empirically productive way to show how members who are low on traditional organizational hierarchies can negotiate power. Although market discourses are frequently cited as powerful and colonizing, this research offered means for challenging them through the strategic use of communication. In this

case, those in traditionally low positions on organizational hierarchies were creative in their communication in order to overcome financial disparities. Although participants structured the university system as having the most resources, participants also asserted the need for equality and reciprocity. In order to achieve such reciprocity, participants resisted discourses of the university system through their leverage of gatekeeping, code switching, empathy, and potentially legitimizing.

The practice of gatekeeping was a way for UP participants to control access to places and spaces of community knowledge. When faced with the strength of the university system resources and the tendency for university members to dominate conversations, UP participants responded by allowing or disallowing access to community knowledge. For example, Hopeland residents had their own steering committee that reviewed any potential research. They had the ability to reject the ideas of university academics, such as the professor I mentioned in Chapter Six who wanted to study mental illness. This gatekeeping ability served as leverage against the power of the university.

Another resource that assisted UP participants in leveraging power amidst university resources was the ability to code switch, and to "speak the language" of several systems as well as several cultures. UP participants who could speak several languages and move comfortably between community and university systems were influential, and often promoted to influential positions in the university system. This code switching ability was a considerable resource that could not be bought on the market.

Two other critical resources were empathy and legitimizing. UP participants showed particular strength in their ability to empathize with partners and build trust.

Thus, while the university system remained suspect, UP was lauded and appreciated for building strategic bridges. This empathy was attractive to participants from both community and university systems, and was often juxtaposed with a university tendency to control. And, although I did not hear enough about the concept of legitimizing from participants in this study, I believe it was a notable exception in this study, and one that warrants future attention. One participant's declaration that research is "illusory" until community members agree it is legitimate was a powerful notion. This potential for community members to act as peer review warrants further attention. This study was a beginning to the exploration of the dialectic of control in this case, and the exploration of how authoritative resources leveraged in communication can contend with the power of traditional material resources.

In addition to its critical application, this study offered an extension to the structurating activity theory (SAT) notion of contradictions (H. E. Canary, 2010a, 2010b). Past research employing SAT has focused on using the concepts of contradictions to understand policy knowledge and policy processes (H. E. Canary, 2010b, 2010b; H. E. Canary & McPhee, 2009). This study showed that the SAT concepts of contradictions can also be extended and fruitfully paired with a study of organizational change between two systems. Viewing what participants considered "barriers" to organizational change as contradictions allowed for a more detailed analysis of what systemic elements were in contradiction. This analysis elucidated ways in which contradictions could be generative. Furthermore, when contradictions were not generative, SAT allowed for an understanding of what systemic practices and resources endured as obstacles to change. Understanding barriers as contradictions also allowed for a more sophisticated

understanding of why change strategies may or may not face resistance or challenge. This knowledge can be used to assist organizations in developing more strategic plans for organizational change.

Finally, this study contributed to understandings of organizational change. Past research using structuration theory has focused on planned, top-down organizational efforts to change. Leaders and managers usually lead these efforts, and research findings often indicate that change might have been more successful with greater input from employees. By contrast, this study focused on change efforts that were collaborative. By looking at the structuration of the activities of UP and partnership, and then looking at how participants attempted to change the university system, I presented a complex account of planning organizational change that focused on the communication choices of those in lower levels of organizational hierarchy.

This study showed that collaborative change can act as an early identification process that reveals contradictions that could manifest during organizational change efforts. By examining contradictions through the lens of SAT, this study showed that when organizational participants discuss "barriers" to change, those barriers can be seen as symptomatic of larger institutional tensions. This research departs from accounts of planned top-down change in the identification of potential problems and the generation of desired new discourses. The change strategies used by UP participants in this research have the potential to facilitate meaningful change because they are participatory, research based, can identify conflicts and resistances early, which could mitigate significant backlash. In other words, this research offers the ability to inoculate participants before their change efforts and alert them to possible resistance. Therefore, in contrast to

planned change initiatives that have gone awry, this research shows that investing time pre-change in participatory practices could result in identification of early conflicts. Additional research could elucidate what effect this identification process could have on participant satisfaction and/or implementation of change initiatives.

However, this case also bears resemblance to structurational accounts of planned change. It showed that, like top-down planned change, collaborative change could also exhibit internal contradictions that can make change efforts controversial. Like employees resist managers in planned change by perpetuating conflicting structures, UP participants resisted each other by perpetuating conflicting structures. This could be seen in structures of *Confusion* as well as *Hopeland,* which alluded to divisive elements among participants.

By examining contradictions such as *Deficit Discourses* and *The Marginalization of Community Based Research (CBR)*, this case also showed some potential challenges for UP when engaging in change efforts. Changing deficit discourses about the community by showcasing cultural wealth, integration, and teaching and learning are important strategies because they reframe community members and their resources in the attempt to resolve the quaternary contradiction. The suggested alternatives also reframe community and university as not two systems but one. However, while these strategies are working toward partnership and collaboration, other patterns such as rewarding deficit situations with university resources or framing university members as elitist are working at cross purposes. Similarly, while UP participants want to showcase the desirability of CBR for departments and administration, patterns about the difficulty of partnership and CBR are working at cross purposes. Therefore, even if retention,

promotion, and tenure policies change, if participants continue to talk of CBR as difficult and not rewarded, change could be difficult and the practice could continue to be marginalized.

Finally, I argued that this study would address a critical silence about educational institutions in the organizational communication literature. This study showed that such organizations are interesting sites of competing stakeholders and ideologies. Educational institutions are also excellent contexts in which to study complex collaborative change efforts. My findings indicate that, because of the history of these organizations, participants were often haunted by structures of the past, and lingering past resentments. These resentments created difficult challenges to change efforts and building trust between schools and communities. Structuration was a productive tool in the analysis of such institutions, because it allowed for exploration of structural properties that come to bear on education, including the market and democratic discourse. This research showed that educational institutions are important to those involved with them, and are unique in the level of influence they have on the communities that surround them. In this case, there was a great deal of interest and emotion about what happened at the university, even among stakeholders who were not formally connected to the university. This affirms the university as an important public place that has an influence on all community members regardless of their enrollment status.

Methodological Contributions

While this study offered several contributions to structuration theory, I also made the choice to approach this case by blending critical and engaged organizational communication approaches. As I discussed in Chapter Three, the format and conventions

of a dissertation prevented me from ideal forms of engagement and critical scholarship that have been suggested by disciplinary scholars. In order to reconcile my desire to blend critical and engaged research with the requirements of this dissertation, I created and experimented with the perspective of an *engaged advisor*, which I discussed in Chapter Three.

The *engaged advisor* blended critical research with engaged communication goals in two distinct ways. First, my role as a researcher with UP was as a collaborator. This role both honored engaged communication research and honored the organization's goals of partnership. Since I did not co-theorize with my participants, and rather chose my own theoretical lens, my role as a collaborator was a better fit than that of an activist. Also, since I did not co-theorize, and since I was a collaborator and not an expert, I argued that the goal of this research was descriptive advice. This was in contrast to both traditional conceptions of emancipation and the dispensation of unsolicited advice.

The goal of descriptive advice best fit this case because partnership, as seen in *Reciprocity,* works to position everyone as powerful, therefore no one should theoretically be in need of emancipation. Also, descriptive advice should be read in contrast to unsolicited advice, because UP welcomed my involvement and was interested in my findings. They did not employ gatekeeping to keep me out, and were forthcoming in invitations to join email lists, attend meetings, and review documents. Several people told me that I was lucky that the organization wanted to work with me, and I concur. Throughout this study, I recognized that the participants and staff of UP were extremely intelligent and taught me. They possessed their own opinions and advice; I was glad that my advice was merely one informed perspective among many. Therefore, I believe the

engaged advisor role and purpose was a natural fit with the study of partnership, and believe it holds future potential for engaged communication research.

However, in light of this study's data, the *engaged advisor* role may be viewed as a dangerous compromise. In this study, I argued that CBR runs the risk of being marginalized because it does not follow "traditional" research patterns and practices. Nonetheless, I did not engage in the type of CBR that UP may believe is the best case scenario. In other words, the *engaged advisor* role may be viewed as suspect because it valorizes aspects of traditional research such as disciplinary theory. What I have done in this role is, in effect, a type of marginalization of CBR. University resources that I rely upon effected my ability to create a deeper engagement. In my need to finish this project expeditiously because of my own funding and desire for a degree, I took shortcuts in theorizing that served to position me as an expert and remove community members from theorizing. What I fashioned as a creative compromise could be seen as a type of sellout that was precipitated by the domination of university structures.

Descriptive Advice for UP

As I discussed in the previous section, my goal in this research was descriptive advice for UP, and so in this section, I humbly offer a few opinions that I hope may add to conversations among UP participants. To begin, I want to focus on several strengths I observed in the organization, and then offer a few pieces of constructive criticism. Overall, I believe that the organization and its participants are extraordinary. The feedback I often received throughout this research was praise for the organization's accomplishments and the work of partnership. Those involved with UP showed

significant leadership both in the organization and beyond. It is an organization of leaders, and is doing many things right.

Several strengths of UP that stood out to me were its staff, its persistence, and its critical and participatory processes. When I first attended the staff retreat in 2010, their level of knowledge immediately impressed me. It was clear that the staff had considerable research abilities, social skills, and an ambitious agenda. As I talked to more participants in the organization, staff excellence was an important topic of conversation. Many participants thought the staff should expand or receive raises. I watched many staff members interacting with community members and faculty, and they were very well respected, exemplifying the facile code switching I discussed in this study.

UP also impressed me with its persistence and determination. The organization was founded through feedback from hundreds of community interviews. Over ten years, it has not abandoned this participatory spirit, although participation processes are often structured as difficult. UP participants persisted in their desire for partnership, continued to follow their strategic plan, and moved forward with determination. Even though many participants expressed difficulty in the work, they continued. I was inspired by many participants quiet yet diligent work in moving forward. For example, even though several faculty have to constantly defend and explain their community based research, and engage in difficult reflection about their own privileges, they persist. One of my favorite quotes from a staff member was: “Own your power and get busy.”

Finally, UP’s critical and participatory processes were exciting, and showed that the organization was willing to remain vulnerable and open to critique. The staff’s critical backgrounds made this an exciting organization that grappled with complex

issues of power. At UP, I observed and heard discussions about racial tensions, socioeconomic tensions, educational tensions, and tensions around representation. Although these tensions exist in all organizations, UP participants were actively working through them. Whiteness and white privilege were casual conversation topics in my interviews and in staff meetings. This willingness to engage in critical analysis was an important strength.

While I believe that UP has much strength, this research can also help them to identify a few concerning patterns. My descriptive advice focuses on the discursive patterns and practices of *Confusion, Hopeland, Not Service/Outreach,* and *Difficulty*. I also comment holistically on work to change institutional structures of public higher education. However, as I offer this advice, I am certain that I am not the first to think of this feedback, and in many cases I know that UP is already working through some of the issues that I address.

First, the structure of *Confusion* is problematic. UP will need to work to create an organizational identity that is clear and relatable. Addressing organizational confusion will help them in all of their organizational goals, and also help their participants and staff members become better advocates for the organization. It concerns me that confusion continues in the advisory board meetings. I think this points to the challenge of academics controlling the agenda and conversation, and making it daunting for participants (even other academics) to come forward and admit they don't understand what is being discussed. The UP vision statements and plans continue to be very complex and difficult to reproduce. It is troubling that some participants need to go home and do homework in order to understand a participatory process such as a board meeting. UP

meetings and processes should work to ensure more participation, clarity, and clear repetition of relatable organizational goals.

Hopeland was interesting to me because I did not expect to hear so much tension about this aspect of UP. As an outsider beginning this study, it seemed that Hopeland was successful and often praised in the media and around the university. I was surprised by the number of participants who told me that they were concerned about how much UP was putting into Hopeland. The tension between communities with historical roots and incoming populations was interesting. If I lived in UP communities, I'm sure I would have expected to see this tension. My advice to UP is to find ways to discuss how Hopeland is explicitly serving the mission of UP. The most tension seemed to come from confusion over how Hopeland led to enrollment in the university. Practices such as a discussion, video presentation, or curriculum development about how this connection is created may create greater understanding and serve to ease tensions around this aspect of the organization.

As I have mentioned in several chapters of this dissertation, the structure of *Not Service/Outreach* is troubling because of its oppositional identification. In other words, UP participants were defensive about service learning and outreach. From the beginning of this study, I have been unable to reconcile the defensiveness about service learning and outreach with UP's relationships with service and outreach agencies and programs. At the same time, UP participants were confused about what UP *is,* and instead of focusing on what it *is,* the response was "here is what it *isn't*." I was often met with, "Well, I don't know what UP is, but I know it's not service or outreach." In terms of structuration, it would be more productive to abandon this oppositional pattern in favor of a positive

proclamation of objectives, as I mentioned in my discussion of *Confusion.* The "not service" pattern could be replaced with an affirmative pattern drawing attention instead to partnership and community based research (CBR), aligning with the organization's goals to promote those activities. Additionally, focusing patterns on partnership and CBR can create an identity boundary that could also improve interorganizational relationships with the service learning center on campus and corporations in the community.

Finally, I offer some advice about the structure of *Difficulty*. As I alluded to earlier, participants expressed difficulty to me one on one, yet felt uncomfortable expressing difficulty in UP meetings including staff meetings and advisory board meetings. Partnership has several aspects that could be considered emotional labor, and so I think UP needs to consider some ways to create outlets where participants can express difficulty. Expressing diverse perspectives can lead to more quality decisions about how to manage contradictions (H. E. Canary, 2010b).

My last piece of advice concerns Chapter Six's interest in attempts to change the university system and desired new discourses. Overall, I found it very easy for UP participants to discuss what they wanted to change. They readily discussed all the negative patterns of talk happening at the university, and could cite multiple examples of those negative patterns. However, when I asked how they wanted these patterns to change, the answers were more hesitant and unsure. Although I identified "desired new discourses," I often wondered why it was so much more difficult for participants to tell me what they would rather hear. In many cases, participants told me they didn't really know what would be better. I think imagining new and positive alternatives should be a regular practice of UP. One of the most attractive feature about structuration theory is

that, in every interaction, we possess the power to make alternative choices in our communication patterns (Giddens, 1984). Imagining positive alternatives can be a generative practice.

Desired New Directions

In this research, I moved from large ideological tensions over public higher education to a critical case study of a campus-community partnership, and participant discourse about partnership work and goals. This movement was possible through the lens of structuration theory, which allowed me to show the interplay between structural properties of social systems, and the conscious choices of agents to talk in ways that reproduce situations, or transform them into something better. The findings of this study extend structuration theory in several productive ways, and pointed to several future opportunities.

First, Giddens (1984) concept of authoritative resources is a productive concept that I address in this research. However, future research can help to contest or extend these findings in regard to gatekeeping, codeswitching, empathy, and legitimizing. Due to the limited amount of time I spent in the field, and the lack of longitudinal data, I was able to provide only a brief picture of these resources that could be significantly expanded. In particular, codeswitching offers a unique way to look at community-based research and respond to critiques about what is and what is not considered academic research. Empathy is also interesting because it shows a type of emotional labor that does not appear to drain employees, but make them more powerful. Also, the concept of legitimizing appears only as a glimmer in this study, and could be an exciting avenue for future research into a type of community peer review for academics.

This study also opened a conversation about "oppositional identification." Although organizational communication scholars have a long history of studying identification and identity, I had trouble locating research that covered this topic. This research only begins to explain this type of identification. Future organizational communication research could explore how this type of oppositional identification impacts an organization and its employees. In terms of structuration, I consider this a detrimental pattern in this case, yet future research could identify unique cases where this type of structure is employed, and if it is enabling or constraining to change efforts.

Finally, future research can continue to investigate educational institutions and their significant influence. This study was limited to the public university context, and yet private contexts also offer important insight. Also, this study focused on creating initial understanding of campus-community partnership, and further research can track the progress and transformation of such partnerships. Future research could also yield distinctions between partnerships at different institutional types and different educational levels.

The conversation about the changing identities of public research institutions is contentious and varied (Arum & Roksa, 2011), creating significant opportunities for organizational communication scholars interested in institutional change. This study contributed to this conversation and yet more research is needed to create greater understanding about these powerful organizations. Public educational institutions are complex organizations that blend both government and private and nonprofit and corporate. They have many stakeholders who are often ideologically conflicted. As Ashcraft and Allen (2009) argued, organizational communication scholars too often

surrender the study of educational institutions to Instructional Communication scholars. Because of their significant power, influence, and complexity, educational institutions warrant further disciplinary inquiry.

Parting with Partnership

Does an engaged scholar every really disengage? As I end this dissertation, I look forward to seeing UP's progress and transformations, and look forward to the innovations in partnership work. I look forward to all the work that will make public universities more publicly responsive organizations. Tensions in public universities and the specter of corporate colonization often make headlines. Yet, through my research, I am repeatedly reminded of the people and organizations that work creatively each day to be inclusive and inspirational.

There are many rationales for the work of partnership. It creates a more representative student body. It encourages more inclusive teaching. It directs academics toward more exciting and publicly responsive research topics. Overall, I agree with all of these rationales, and simply argue that it makes our public universities more exciting places to be. Giddens (1984) argues that structure provides ontological security, and that we often seek comfort with patterns even when they are not in our best interest. UPartner was an inspiration to me because they wanted interruptions, they wanted change, and they wanted insecurity if it could lead to ethical changes in one of the most influential organizations in the state.

I often hear students being told, "Study what you love." However, throughout both my masters and doctoral degree programs, a public university has supported me both academically and financially. I am in a relationship with the citizens of my state

institution. Egocentric interests do not serve this relationship. That is why I want to be part of a community of engaged scholars who advocate looking to larger social problems as the impetus for research. Engaged scholarship introduces a multiplicity of voices in our universities, our classrooms, and our research. In this project, I took a step toward the kind of engagement I admire. I had many partners and am grateful to everyone at the university and everyone at UP who allowed me the time to provide this brief and subjective snapshot of an inspirational organization.

And as it turns out, I loved what I studied.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your relationship to UPartner (UP)?
2. When you're asked about what UP does in a casual conversation, like speaking to a friend or a coworker who doesn't know about them, how do you respond? What does UP do?
3. Have you heard other people talking about UP? How do you think other people talk about the organization, accurate or not? Do you have any examples?
4. What have been some of the memorable moments in your work with UP? Can you tell me about one or tell a story about one?

1. It's important for UP that the University is a partner with local communities. What do you think that means? In terms of the work of UP, what is a partnership?
2. Has the university been a good partner? Why or why not?
3. How have you heard U personnel talk about UP? How so? Have U personnel spoken with you about UP? How so?
4. What are your thoughts on why faculty work with UP?
5. What are your thoughts on why more faculty don't work with UP? What are your thoughts on why more faculty don't do community based research?

1. UP wants the university to be more excited and involved in partnership and community based research. What needs to change for that to happen?
2. As a UP participant, how do you want the University to talk about West Side communities? What would you like to hear from professors and students and University leaders?
3. In terms of UP's work with the University, what would you like to see change in the next ten years?
4. In ten years, in the best case scenario, what would the partnership be like between UP and the University? What is the brightest future you could imagine?

Parting questions for fun?: Could you draw UP? Can you think of a metaphor for UP? If it were a fairy tale or a fable, what would it be?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Participant	Affiliation	Interview Held
1	Staff, Community Resident	At UP
2	Staff	At UP
3	Staff, Community Resident	At the University
4	Staff, Community Resident	At UP
5	Advisory Board	At partner site
6	Staff, Community Resident	At UP
7	Community Organization	At partner site
8	Advisory Board, Community Resident	At partner site
9	Advisory Board, University	At the University
10	University	At home
11	Advisory Board, Community Organization	At partner site
12	Staff, Community Resident	At UP
13	Staff	At UP
14	Advisory Board, Community Resident	At partner site
15	Staff	At UP
16	Advisory Board, Community Organization, Community Resident	At partner site
17	Advisory Board, University	At University
18	Community Organization	At partner site
19	University	At University
20	Advisory Board, University	At University
21	Advisory Board, University, Community Resident	At University
22	Advisory Board, Community Resident	At coffeeshop
23	University	At University

APPENDIX C

VISION AND PLANNING DOCUMENTS

VISION

The University and west side neighborhoods share a vision of a community woven together through partnerships based on mutual empowerment, discovery and learning rooted in diverse life experiences. By addressing systemic barriers to educational success, these collaborative partnerships foster increased access to higher education for community members, a University enriched by its *participation with the community, and an enhanced quality of life for all involved

MISSION

UPartner brings together University and west side resources in reciprocal learning, action and benefit.
"…a community coming together"

VALUES

- UP is committed to mutual respect, empowerment and learning rooted in diverse life experiences.
- Understanding and knowledge are furthered by the open, active and mutual sharing of information and resources.
- Multiple kinds of knowledge and life experiences are central to address social, community and University issues.
- Knowledge is power and must be available to everyone.
- It is the right of all people to have access to the greatest range of opportunities; it is the choice of each individual how to utilize these opportunities.

As an organization, UP strives to live its value

UPartner (UP)

Long Range Planning Document
Key Strategies for Years 2011 – 2015

Goals for working with Community Partners (Residents, Schools and Organizations)

For all goals identified below, UP staff, board and partners will work to support partnerships and work within and across partnerships to:

I Increase resident empowerment and participation of community organizations
- a. Develop stronger relations between residents of all backgrounds and the organizations that work with and/or represent them in order to have a single voice while they maintain their different experiences and cultures.
- b. Encourage diverse means of communication so community organizations, schools, or departments are able to communicate directly with interested resident groups
- c. Support greater involvement of community partners in advisory roles and partnership level decision-making

II Build the capacity of school-based partnerships and partners
- a. Work with partners, to increase partnerships that increase access to resources within the schools
- b. Support active partnerships in all middle schools and high schools in our target area to create a more direct pipeline and internalization of higher education as a personal option
- c. Support partners to create opportunities for parental leadership and engagement of parent already involved in schools.

III Build the capacity of departments and community organizations to support residents on a long-term basis.
- a. Help departments or/and community organizations to support resident involvement (stipends, hiring more residents)
- b. Facilitate conversations between academic departments, schools and community organizations regarding the experience and abilities of residents.
- c. Provide education, preparation and support to academic departments and community organizations.

IV Build the capacity of community organizations and schools to become active in university-community partnerships
- a. Support community-based research (CBR) projects connected to community organizations and schools and focused on community-identified issues
- b. Build the capacity of community organizations and schools to be financially sustainable and work in partnership
- c. Increase faculty and student involvement connected to schools and organizations
- d. Balance and share resources (i.e. funding, technical expertise, involvement of board member with community orgs., university research) that support the involvement of community organizations and schools in UP partnerships

Goals for working with Higher Education

For all goals identified below, UP staff, board and partners will work to support partnerships and work within and across partnerships to:

I Strengthen the relationship of UP with colleges and departments (target specific and interested departments that are necessary to community priorities).

- a. Work with university administration to advocate for and provide the necessary resources for community engaged teaching and research
- b. Develop partnership with U of U Human Resources (and other interested staff) and west side communities and residents (i.e. interviews on the west side; recruit faculty and staff to live and shop west side).
- c. Work with students associations to increase visibility of partnership work to the broader student population.

II Strengthen quality and visibility of community-based teaching and research

- a. Develop mechanisms that support community partners being actively involved in teaching and research (ex - increase opportunities for resident researcher positions, site-based coordinator, teaching assistants, using existing partner data, attract department to conduct local research, rich diversity in west side communities that can be generalized to national).
- b. Work with departments (U of U and SLCC) to develop curriculum that is based on community knowledge responsive to community priorities (residents, schools and organizations and increase number of university and college courses taught on the west side.
- c. Explore ways to support student learning connected to UP partnerships.
- d. Work with VP for Research to increase resources for community-based research (i.e. grants, research video).

Goals for Partnerships

For all goals identified below, UP staff, board and partners will work to support partnerships and work within and across partnerships to:

I. Identify Measurable Outcomes that reflect UP Vision
    a. Track partnership goals and impact in logic-model format through the creation of a central UP database.
        i. Link goals to outcomes.
    b. Create standard UP report template for semesterly condensed reports that can be used by all UP stakeholders.

II. Focus UP work on increasing 'Next Level Impact' towards system change

a. Create 'stepping stones' to accessing educational/economic opportunities (i.e WLI→HiF→new AOCE class→internship at U or employment training).
b. Balance 'center of gravity' of UP partnership work.
    i. Strengthen links between partnerships and schools.
    ii. New space as hub for partnership connections (outside of the Glendale Neighborhood).

III. Glendale Coalition/partnerships/synergy/change

Organizational Goals

For all goals identified below, UP staff, board and partners will work to support partnerships and work within and across partnerships to:

I Work with staff, board and stakeholders to use the UP Strategic Plan as an active tool that guides the organization.
- a. Connect funding and resources to strategic goals
- b. Integrate strategic plan in organizational meetings (use actively and regularly to guide partnerships – Living Document)

II Strengthen marketing and communication to increase visibility and understanding of UP in the community and on campus
- a. Make website more user friendly; include information in Spanish
- b. Expand and strengthen relationships with Spanish language media
- c. Update and better utilize UP's social networks
- d. Work with staff and IT to gather and input all partners in the database
- e. Create a short clear description of UP's mission and vision ("elevator speech").
- f. Work with interested Board members to be representative (ambassadors) for UP on respective campuses and in the community

III Increase staff and partners development and training opportunities
- a. Increase professional development for staff and partners training on identified topics (i.e. partnership building models and skills, assessment skills, partnership sustainability, budgets, time management, communication, conflict resolution)

IV Increase roles and opportunities for active involvement for UP Advisory Board
- a. Support staff to develop relationships with specific Board members
- b. Increase opportunities for Board members to mentor UP staff and partners
- c. Provide more opportunities for Board feedback
- d. Increase opportunities for interested Board members to serve as partners to UP and participate in UP events
- e. Engage board in discussion of the expansion of UP work outside zip code areas

V. Strengthen organizational structure and management
   a. Build organizational capacity to strengthen internal (personnel) and fiscal management (i.e., hire Assistant Director; acquire U of U department audit; implement new HR employee evaluation form).
   b. Diversify funding (major donors, events, multi-year funding, city, county, state and federal funding streams)
   c. Create comprehensive partnership impact of where funding is currently coming from and revise grants calendar
   d. Articulate decision-making structure around partnership programming and funding and increase transparency around fundraising decision-making (i.e. being able to explain why one partnership or site is prioritized over another)

UP Vision

For final staff and Board approval

The University and west side neighborhoods share a vision of a community woven together through partnerships based on mutual empowerment, discovery and learning rooted in diverse life experiences. By addressing systemic barriers to educational success, these collaborative partnerships foster increased access to higher education for community members, a University enriched by its *_participation with_* the community, and an enhanced quality of life for all involved.

*_Words voted on and changed at Board Meeting 4/20/2011_

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Type of Observation	Hours
Board Meeting	2.5
Board Meeting	2.5
Board Meeting	2.5
Staff Meeting	2.5
Staff Meeting	2
Staff Retreat	1.5
Hopeland Event/Tour	2
University Event	1
University Event	3
Class Observation	3
University Administration Meeting Observation	2
Community Event	2
Community Event	1
Anniversary Event	3
Total:	30.5 hours

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